

**The tragedy of**  
**DIDO & AENEAS**

**P. VERGILIUS MARO**  
**AENEID LIB. IV**

**P. OVIDIUS NASO**  
**HEROIDES VII**

**TRANSLATED BY PETER GALLAGHER**



# THE TRAGEDY OF DIDO & AENEAS

## A DUAL LANGUAGE TEXT

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*Dido and Aeneas in the Cave: from the 'Roman Vergil' Codex in the Vatican Library. This is one of the three oldest manuscripts of the poem, created sometime in the 5th Century CE.*

# ABOUT

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This book is the result of a year spent — mostly in COVID-19 ‘lockdowns’ — recovering my high-school Latin. The translations themselves occupied about a month. They are mine as far as possible. But no one who reads either of these great poems today can, or should, ignore the centuries of scholarship that has verified the texts we have received (none of the *Aeneid* earlier than the 4th Century C.E. and none of the *Heroides* before the 11th Century), and comments on their language and interpretation. Vergil, especially, is a master of Hellenistic rhetorical tropes and the poetic contractions that delight when you see what he has done but can otherwise defy a modern reader. I have relied on the commentary in James O’Hara’s edition of *Aeneid* IV and on S.G. Prince and G.W. Lawall’s edition of *Heroides*.

I have not attempted a metrical, let alone a rhymed, translation: both poems are strictly metrical in the original although rhyme is unknown in Roman verse. Nor have I used a straightforward modern prose style: the language of Vergil, at least, demands something more ‘elevated’. What I have tried to do is to make the lines of the English version more or less keep pace with the Latin. The greater concision of Latin, especially poetry, makes this a challenge that I haven’t quite matched.

Also, I have broken the poetry up into passages that do not appear in the original. The divisions reflect changes of subject or attention in the poem. I hope you find that they help you to follow the progress.

For a more polished, still more compact, expert modern translation of the whole poem, I recommend Shardi Bartsch’s “*Aeneid*” (Profile Books, 2021), available from Amazon.

ATR EGINA GRAVILLAM DV DVM SAVCIACVRA  
 VVLNV SALLIV ENLSEITCAFCOCARILTVRIGNI  
 MVLTA VIRI VIRIV SANI MOMVLIV SQ VERFCVR SAT  
 GENTLSTIONOSTAERENTINFLXITECTORFVVLTVS  
 VERBAQ VENEICLACIDAM MEMBRIS DATCVRAQ VITTEM  
 POSTERAPHTOEBEALVSTRASATLAMPADETERRAS  
 VMENTEMQ VEA VROR APOLODI MOVERATVMBRAM  
 CUMSICVNANILMAMADLOQ VITVRMALESANASOROREM  
 ANNASORORQVAEMESVSPENSAMIN SOMNILATERRENT

*The first lines of Book IV of the Aeneid as they would have been copied for a Roman reader: all majuscule letters, no spaces or punctuation.*

*The distinguishing feature of Roman verse is not rhyme but rhythm. The Aeneid's lines comprise six 'feet' of dactyls (a long vowel followed by two short vowels: ~~~) although, sometimes a spondee (two long vowels :~~) substitutes for a dactyl.*

*There are some 'rules of thumb' that indicate which vowels are long and which are short but most speakers just learned which was which. The longer vowels did not necessarily coincide with the stress ('ictus') that the sense of the phrase suggested for each word so that the poet could manipulate both the rhythms of sound and of emphasis for different effects.*

*Poetry was also marked by certain rhetorical devices, tone, and by resonant use of words and forms that echoed each other or modified the sense of another nearby word or phrase, even when not connected by syntax.*

# PROLOGUE

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Dido, Queen of Carthage, is the most sympathetic character in the Aeneid. Which is strange when we consider that Vergil's great, 12-book Epic sets out successfully to elevate and define the mythic foundations of Rome, whose most successful *enemy* up to Vergil's time was Carthage.

The affair of Dido and Aeneas is only a way-station in the Trojan hero's quest for Latium: the heartland of the future Roman Empire. Yet the tale that comprises Book IV has echoed more strongly than any other part of the poem, in every art form, throughout Western cultural history.

## THE STORY

Vergil gives Dido a strong case for heroism, too. Her story begins with the murderous deceit of her brother, Pygmalion, King of Tyre — then capital of ancient Phoenicia — who slew her husband Sychaeus for his money. Dido narrowly escaped and, after a lengthy voyage, used Sychaeus' treasure to purchase an enclave on the shores of North Africa from a local potentate, Iarbas. Here, surrounded by potential enemies, she founded a great city, Carthage.

Meanwhile, Aeneas, a nobleman of Troy married to Creusa, daughter of the Trojan king Priam, is one of the few survivors of the fiery, bloody destruction of the city by the triumphant Maecenean Greeks. By his own account Aeneas fought to the end in the hand-to-hand battles in the streets of Troy. But after Priam is killed he flees the city with his wife, his son Ascanius, and his aged father Anchises whom he carries on his shoulders. In the confusion, Creusa becomes lost and is killed, her ghost appearing briefly to Aeneas to prophesy that he will find another "royal bride" where he is headed.

Escaping with his soldiers by ship, Aeneas learns from the god Apollo at in his shrine at Delos and, again, from a dream in which he is visited by the gods of his hearth (the Penates) that his fate is

to found a new ‘Troy’ in the West. Still, due to the opposition of Zeus’ consort Juno, he spends seven years tossing about the Eastern Mediterranean being buffeted (like Odysseus, the Ithacan Greek hero) by misfortune, monsters and the sea. As, finally, he approaches Italy, the scheming Juno arranges a huge storm that breaks up his fleet, sinks some of his ships and wrecks Aeneas himself on the coast of North Africa near Carthage.

Lonely and passionate, the Carthaginian queen Dido falls completely for the heroic, handsome Aeneas who recounts his adventures at a feast she gives in his honour. She worries about the ‘fault’ of remarrying — old Roman tradition held that a widow should not — but still... The meddling of opposing deities (Venus and Juno) and her own impetuous love-blindness — the stuff of classic tragedy — lead her to believe that Aeneas, who beds her while they shelter from a storm on a hunting trip, has agreed to the marriage she seeks. (We never learn what he said or did not say.) She showers him with gifts and regal costumes and even offers to share her throne with him. Then, when he tries to sneak away in his fleet one night to continue his quest, she explodes with surprise and anger.

Confronted by Dido, Aeneas seems not to listen or to excuse his behaviour, revealing only that a vision of Mercury, the messenger of Jove, has compelled him to leave to fulfill his destiny in Italy. Dido is beside herself with rage at his ‘betrayal’ and her own foolishness. Then, even as her temper cools, she suicides — by knife, not immolation — out of shame and despair, tricking her sister into helping her. Her worst fault, as she says, was to love, and to be deceived by, an heroic and apparently worthy man and to be generous in her affection.

## **AMBIGUITIES IN THE AENEID**

None of this reflects well on Aeneas whose epithet in Virgil’s epic is “*pius*”, meaning worthy, faithful and dutiful. This is the hero who founds not only the Roman race but also the family of Julius Caesar and Rome’s first Emperor, Augustus. His “piety” is a foundational virtue on which Augustus, certainly, modelled his own public persona.



Aeneas' mythic role cannot be untarnished by the human story nor — because Vergil gives a prominent role in the book to Dido and her hopes, conflicts and despair — by our injured sense of natural justice. Vergil implies that Aeneas forces himself to hold-in his own pain at the separation lest he make Dido's pain worse. He shows Aeneas driven, whether he likes it or not, by his 'destiny' and by divine direction. But, by his stoicism — if that's what it is — the Trojan leaves himself open to Dido's accusations of faithlessness and deceit.

This story is Vergil's creation. Before the publication of the Aeneid, the Romans knew a story of Dido that was quite different and did not involve Aeneas or the founding of the Roman race. Superficially, it seems he wants us to approve Aeneas's decision to put 'destiny and duty' before love and reciprocity. But the most intriguing aspect of this dramatic and affecting chapter, is that Vergil chooses, also, to leave the human conflict unresolved.

### **OID'S "HEROINES" (HEROIDES)**

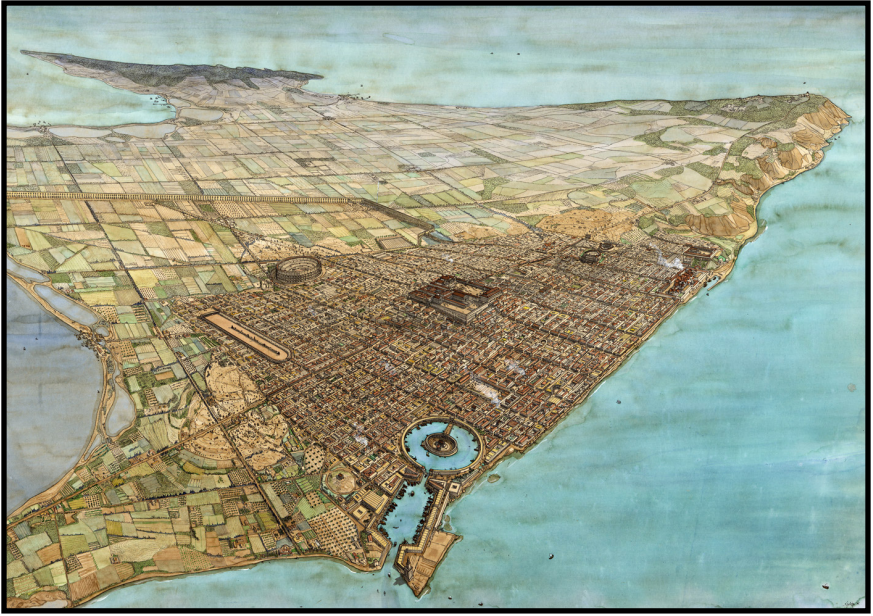
Ovid, with a different motive and in a different format, both builds on and, somehow, also, 'objectifies' our sympathies for Dido. This imaginary 'letter' to Aeneas is a sort of soliloquy; a first-person account that must engage us on her side. But it also teases out her mania.

Dido's letter plays out her conflicting emotions of shame, chagrin, anger, pleading (with her image of Aeneas rather than with the man himself), bargaining and scorn. It is a study in the pathopsychology of a woman who finds her honour and generosity has been betrayed. But it neither explores nor defends her decision to suicide: that is a premiss of the poem, not a subject.

Ovid's art is to frame the letter using not only the story as elaborated by Vergil but even the phrases of the epic poem cast in a light still more sympathetic to Dido. But not so sympathetic that we endorse the sanity of her rant.

Then, taking a risk that Vergil carefully avoided, Ovid concludes with Dido's draft of her own epitaph that 'sticks it to' Aeneas in a way that must have left his descendant, Augustus, rather cross.

“Heroides” is an early book in Ovid’s long career. In Medieval times it was not well regarded: we’re lucky to have any remaining manuscripts. Some of Ovid’s poems remained popular from Classical times but others are lost forever because not enough copies were made. Today, the fifteen poems in this book, comprising letters from famous — and usually badly treated — women, are much better received by the critics.



*A reconstruction of the city of Carthage about the time of the Second Punic War (c. 200 BCE — 6 centuries after Dido). It was a very large and prosperous city of more than half a million inhabitants. Although the Romans utterly destroyed Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War in 146 BCE, the geography seen here, including the magnificent port, can still easily be recognised in the northern suburbs of Tunis.,*



*“Dido and Aeneas”: a fresco from Pompeii in the Third Pompeian Style (10 - 45 BCE). The appearance of this image in a private home, so soon after the Aeneid (19 BCE) began to circulate, suggests the popularity of the story. Aeneas is holding some cloth; perhaps he is undressing Dido. The figures seem to be sitting on a boulder with a hunting(?) dog is at their feet, so this may be the Cave scene.*



# AENEID BOOK IV

**B**ut the Queen had long since been wounded by love;<sup>1</sup>  
It fed on her life's blood and a hidden fire consumed her.  
Many times had this man's valour and his noble descent  
Impressed her; his words, his looks lodged in her breast like  
Arrows. Nor could sleep calm her agitated limbs.  
As the sun's lamp began to brighten the land  
And Dawn in the sky's vault scattered the dewey shadows  
She spoke of her distress to the sister who shared her heart:

“Anna, my sister, I cannot sleep, doubt wracks me!  
Who is this wondrous guest that has come to our house?  
How graceful he seems, how strong, well armed!  
I am ready believe, not without reason, he is a child of Gods.  
Fear shows-up a base character; but what a dreadful fate Has been  
his! What a devastating war he recounted!  
Had my mind not been set, unwavering, against any wish to bind  
myself in marriage after love first deceived me by death,  
Had I not been weary of the bridal bed and wedding torches  
I might perhaps have succumbed to error for such a one.  
I must allow, Anna, that after what happened to Sychaeus,  
And the shattering of our hearth by my murderous brother  
He alone has turned my head or moved my flagging spirit.  
Oh, how well I know the traces of those flames of old!  
But I would rather that the underworld should swallow me  
Or the almighty father's lightening hurl me to the shades,  
— the pale shades and abysmal night of Erebus —  
than I should violate you, Chastity, or break your laws.<sup>2</sup>  
He who first joined me to himself, he has carried off my love;  
He has it and keeps it safe with him in the tomb.”  
So saying, she filled her sister's bosom with upwelling tears.

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<sup>1</sup> Vergil gives a hint of structure to Book IV: there are three ‘divisions’, each indicated by a line beginning “At regina....” (But the Queen...). Wounds, real and metaphorical, and the flames of funeral pyres and wedding torches predominate the imagery.

<sup>2</sup> Augustus passed laws in 18 BCE, around the time *The Aeneid* was published, reversing the traditional strictures against the remarriage of widows.

**A**t *regina* gravi iamdudum saucia cura  
vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni.  
multa viri virtus animo multusque recursat  
gentis honos; haerent infixi pectore vultus  
verbaque nec placidam membris dat cura quietem. 5  
postera Phoebea lustrabat lampade terras  
umentemque Aurora polo dimoverat umbram,  
cum sic unaniam adloquitur male sana sororem:

'Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!  
quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes, 10  
quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis!  
credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum.  
degeneres animos timor arguit. heu, quibus ille  
iactatus fatis! quae bella exhausta canebat!  
si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet 15  
ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali,  
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;  
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,  
huic uni forsán potui succumbere culpa.  
Anna (fatebor enim) miseri post fata Sychaei 20  
coniugis et sparsos fraterna caede penatis  
solus hic inflexit sensus animumque labantem  
impulit. agnosco veteris vestigia flammae.  
sed mihi vel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat  
vel pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras, 25  
pallentis umbras Erebi noctemque profundam,  
ante, pudor, quam te violó aut tua iura resolvo.  
ille meos, primus qui me sibi iunxit, amores  
abstulit; ille habeat secum servetque sepulcro.'  
sic effata sinum lacrimis implevit obortis.

**A**nna replied: “Oh sister, dearer than love’s light to me,  
Will you spend your whole youth alone in morning?  
Nor know the joy of children nor the rewards of Love?

Do you think ashes in the tomb or ghosts of the dead care?  
Granted, while you pined for Sychaeus no suitor moved you:  
Not here in Libya, nor earlier in Tyre. You rejected Iarbas and  
The other potentates who feed off Africa’s lands rich in conquest.  
But will you really reject the delights of love?  
Have you thought about the territory where you settled?  
On this side the Gaetulian cities, a race unconquered in war,  
The wild cavalry of Numidia and the forbidding quicksands of  
Syrtsis hem us in; On the other side, in a region barren with  
drought are the raging Barceans. Then need I mention  
The rising threat of war from your twin in Tyre?

The Trojan ships held their course here by design of the Gods, I  
say, blown by Juno’s favourable winds.<sup>3</sup>  
Can you not see, sister, what a great city,  
What a reign could arise from union with such a man!  
With the support of Trojan troops, how many glories shall  
Carthage heap up! You alone must ask favor of the gods, by  
Making sacrifice, and with generous hospitality devise Reasons  
for the Trojans to remain while winter, the stormy Orion, and an  
implacable sky stir Ocean to rage and rattle the ships.” By these  
words she enflamed a heart bursting  
With love; she gave hope to a mind filled with doubt, and  
resolved any scruples.

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<sup>3</sup> Irony, at least. It was Juno who arranged a devastating storm that wrecked Aeneas’ fleet and stranded him in Carthage, just as he was about to make land, at last, in Italy.

**A**nna refert: 'o luce magis dilecta sorori,  
solane perpetua maerens carpere iuventa  
nec dulcis natos Veneris nec praemia noris?

id cinerem aut manis credis curare sepultos?  
esto: aegram nulli quondam flexere mariti, 35  
non Libyae, non ante Tyro; despectus Iarbas  
ductoresque alii, quos Africa terra triumphis  
dives alit: placitone etiam pugnabis amori?  
nec venit in mentem quorum consederis arvis?  
hinc Gaetulae urbes, genus insuperabile bello, 40  
et Numidae infreni cingunt et inhospita Syrtis;  
hinc deserta siti regio lateque furentes  
Barcae. quid bella Tyro surgentia dicam  
germanique minas?

dis equidem auspiciis reor et Iunone secunda 45  
hunc cursum Iliacas vento tenuisse carinas.  
quam tu urbem, soror, hanc cernes, quae surgere regna  
coniugio tali! Teucrum comitantibus armis  
Punica se quantis attollet gloria rebus!  
tu modo posce deos veniam, sacrisque litatis 50  
indulge hospitio causasque innecte morandi,  
dum pelago desaevit hiems et aquosus Orion,  
quassataeque rates, dum non tractabile caelum.  
His dictis impenso animum flammavit amore  
spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem. 55



Thus the sisters came to the shrines and sued for  
Peace at the altars. They sacrificed lambs, chosen  
According to custom, to Ceres who brings law to the  
Land, to Phoebus, to father Bacchus and, above all,  
To Juno, whose care is the bonds of marriage.  
Taking the sacrificial bowl in her right hand,  
Dido, herself matchless in beauty, poured out a libation  
Between the horns of a splendid white heifer.  
Then in the presence of the Gods she slowly approaches the  
Heaped altars, solemnises the day with gifts and consults The  
still-heaving entrails in the gaping breasts of the beasts.  
Alas! The ignorance of soothsayers! What value have vows  
Or shrines for one madly in love? Her soft marrow is alight,  
And the wound grows, silently, in her breast.

Unhappy Dido, consumed with passion, wanders madly Through  
the town, like a doe in some Cretan wood,  
Struck by an arrow that a shepard, blindly letting the swift  
Point fly from afar, leaves lodged in her.  
The poor beast ranges all through the woods and glades  
Of Dictaeos, the mortal dart wedged in her side.  
Now she takes Aeneas with her though the town  
Showing off the wealth of Sidon and the fine buildings,  
She begins to speak, but her voice trails off;  
Now as the day wanes she insists on another banquet:  
Again she madly craves to hear of Trojan sorrows,  
And again she hangs on the lips of the speaker.

*P*incipio delubra adeunt pacemque per aras  
exquirunt; mactant lectas de more bidentis  
legiferae Cereri Phoeboque patrique Lyaeo,  
Iunoni ante omnis, cui vincla iugalia curae.  
ipsa tenens dextra pateram pulcherrima Dido 60  
candentis vaccae media inter cornua fundit,  
aut ante ora deum pinguis spatiatur ad aras,  
instauratque diem donis, pecudumque reclusis  
pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.  
heu, vatum ignarae mentes! quid vota furentem, 65  
quid delubra iuvant? est mollis flamma medullas  
interea et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.

uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur  
urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,  
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit 70  
pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum  
nescius: illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat  
Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo.  
nunc media Aenean secum per moenia ducit  
Sidoniasque ostentat opes urbemque paratam, 75  
incipit effari mediaque in voce resistit;  
nunc eadem labente die convivia quaerit,  
Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores  
exposcit pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.

Then, when all have left and, in turn, the dim moon's light  
Sinks and the setting stars urge sleep,  
Alone and mournful in her empty palace  
She lies down on the couch he has left.  
She sees and hears him who is not there,  
Or she holds Ascanius on her lap, captivated by his father's look.  
Could this, perhaps, beguile her unspoken love?  
But no start has been made on building the battlement towers,  
The men are not training in arms or preparing the port or  
The ramparts, making them safe against attack.  
Work on the unfinished walls, cut short, has halted  
And the huge cranes, touching the sky, are still.

As soon as Jove's dear wife saw what plague afflicted Dido  
Nor would the Queen's repute would stop her behaving foolishly,  
The daughter of Saturn confronted Venus and spoke to her thus:  
"High praise and huge rewards to you and your boy!<sup>4</sup>  
Mighty and memorable your powers when by one trick  
Two divinities have beguiled one woman.  
The truth has not escaped my notice that, out of fear of our city,  
You held the high houses of Carthage suspect.  
But how will all this end? Where does such contention lead?  
Why do we not, rather, bring about lasting peace and a marriage  
bond?  
What you sought with all your heart you have won:  
Passion rages through Dido's veins, she burns with love.  
Let us then jointly and with equal powers rule the people;  
Let the Queen serve her Phrygian husband and yield the Tyrians  
to you as dowry."

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<sup>4</sup> That is, Cupid, Venus's son.

*P*ost ubi digressi, lumenque obscura vicissim                   80  
luna premit suadentque cadentia sidera somnos,  
sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis  
incubat. illum absens absentem auditque videtque,  
aut gremio Ascanium genitoris imagine capta  
detinet, infandum si fallere possit amorem.                   85  
non coeptae adsurgunt turres, non arma iuventus  
exercet portusve aut propugnacula bello  
tuta parant: pendent opera interrupta minaeque  
murorum ingentes aequataque machina caelo.

Quam simul ac tali persensit peste teneri                   90  
cara Iovis coniunx nec famam obstare furori,  
talibus adgreditur Venerem Saturnia dictis:  
'egregiam vero laudem et spolia ampla refertis  
tuque puerque tuus (magnum et memorabile numen),  
una dolo divum si femina victa duorum est.                   95  
nec me adeo fallit veritam te moenia nostra  
suspectas habuisse domos Karthaginis altae.  
sed quis erit modus, aut quo nunc certamine tanto?  
quin potius pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos  
exercemus? habes tota quod mente petisti:                   100  
ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem.  
communem hunc ergo populum paribusque regamus  
auspiciis; liceat Phrygio servire marito  
dotalisque tuae Tyrios permittere dextrae.'

Venus, sensing that Juno's speech was insincere —  
 Intent as she was on diverting the Trojans from Italian  
 Dominion to the coasts of Libya — began her reply thus:  
 "Who would be so mad as to turn down such a plan  
 Or wish to strive with you in war,  
 So long as events turn out as you suggest?  
 But I am uncertain of fate here; whether it is Jupiter's will<sup>5</sup>  
 Tyrians and Trojans together should build the one city, or  
 If he approve the mingling of the peoples or a treaty of union.  
 As His wife, it is your right to sway his intentions by entreaty.  
 So, go right ahead, I'm behind you." Then queenly Juno answered:  
 "This shall be my task. Now, I will briefly explain by what means  
 Our present purpose may be achieved. Listen!  
 Aeneas and the unhappy Dido prepare to hunt in the forest  
 As soon as tomorrow's Sun rises and repaints the world with his  
 rays.  
 While the beaters close in and ring the glades with hunting nets,  
 I will pour down on them from above a black rain mixed with hail,  
 And ring the whole heavens with thunder.  
 Their companions will flee and will be veiled in the darkness of  
 night  
 Dido and the Trojan leader will come to the same cave.  
 I will be there and, provided I can count on your assent,  
 I shall proclaim her joined and given to him in sure union;  
 This will be their marriage."<sup>6</sup> The Cytherean, not seeking to  
 oppose her,  
 Nodded and smiled at the stratagem she had revealed.

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<sup>5</sup> This is a fib! Near the start of Book I, Venus secretly wheedles a guarantee from Jupiter that Aeneas' destiny as the founder of Latium and the Roman race will hold in spite of Juno's opposition. Venus knows, therefore, that this whole 'marriage plot' is doomed to fail and, when it does, that Dido will be 'collateral damage.'

<sup>6</sup> An alternative way to render the phrase 'hic hymenaeus erit' would be something like: "cue the Wedding March!". That would make Juno's proposal more ambiguous than the phrase I have used. Perhaps Vergil intends we should be a little uncertain.

Olli (sensit enim simulata mente locutam, 105  
 quo regnum Italiae Libycas averteret oras)  
 sic contra est ingressa Venus: 'quis talia demens  
 abnuat aut tecum malit contendere bello?  
 si modo quod memoras factum fortuna sequatur.  
 sed fatis incerta feror, si Iuppiter unam 110  
 esse velit Tyriis urbem Troiaque profectis,  
 miscerive probet populos aut foedera iungi.  
 tu coniunx, tibi fas animum temptare precando.  
 perge, sequar.' tum sic excepit regia Juno:  
 'mecum erit iste labor. nunc qua ratione quod instat 115  
 confieri possit, paucis (adverte) docebo.  
 venatum Aeneas unaque miserrima Dido  
 in nemus ire parant, ubi primos crastinus ortus  
 extulerit Titan radiisque retexerit orbem.  
 his ego nigrantem commixta grandine nimbum, 120  
 dum trepidant alae saltusque indagine cingunt,  
 desuper infundam et tonitru caelum omne ciebo.  
 diffugient comites et nocte tegentur opaca:  
 speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem  
 devenient. adero et, tua si mihi certa voluntas, 125  
 conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo.  
 hic hymenaeus erit.' non adversata petenti  
 adnuit atque dolis risit Cytherea repertis.

**M**eanwhile, Dawn rose and left the Ocean.  
In the brightening glow a chosen crew left the city gates  
Carrying fine and heavy hunting nets and hunting spears  
with broad iron tips.

An African cavalry rides out with dogs keen to follow the scent.  
At the gates, the Punic princes await the Queen, who carries in  
Her bedroom while her prancing steed, in purple and gold livery,  
Champs fiercely on its foam-flecked bit.

At last she appears, attended by a great retinue.

She has thrown on a Sidonian cloak with a brodered border;

Her quiver is gold, her tresses tied up in gold ribbons,

A gold broach securing the purple robe beneath her bosom.

Happy Iulus and his Phrygian companions ride out with them.<sup>7</sup>

Aeneas himself, most handsome of all, comes forth joining his  
band with hers.

As when Apollo quits Lycia his winter home and Xanthus' stream,

To visit his mother's island of Delos and begin again the dance;

While the Cretans, Dryopes and the painted Agathyrsi

Mingling round his altars raise their voices,

The God himself steps lightly along the Cynthian ridges,

His locks decorated with laurel sprigs and bound in gold,

The arrows rattling in his quiver. So, no less blithely went Aeneas

So much did glory shine forth from his noble bearing.

They came to the high mountains and inaccessible passes where,

Behold! wild goats dislodged from the rocky peaks scrambled  
down the cliffs;

Others bent their course across the open glades where the deer

Kicking up a cloud of dust left the hills behind.

Young Ascanius rejoicing in his lively mount, now chasing these,  
now in front of those,

Prays that amid the helpless herd a wild boar, foaming from the  
chase,

Might be his or a tawny lion come down from the mountain.

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<sup>7</sup> Iulus is the name by which Aeneas' son Ascanius will be known after they arrive in Italy, where he fathers the Julian clan. The first letter is an "i" not a "j" so it is pronounced in three syllables: "Ee-ool-us".

*O*ceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit. 130  
 it portis iubare exorto delecta iuventus,  
 retia rara, plagae, lato venabula ferro,  
 Massylique ruunt equites et odora canum vis.  
 reginam thalamo cunctantem ad limina primi  
 Poenorum exspectant, ostroque insignis et auro  
 stat sonipes ac frena ferox spumantia mandit. 135  
 tandem progreditur magna stipante caterva  
 Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo;  
 cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,  
 aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.  
 nec non et Phrygii comites et laetus Iulus 140  
 incedunt. ipse ante alios pulcherrimus omnis  
 infert se socium Aeneas atque agmina iungit.  
 qualis ubi hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta  
 deserit ac Delum maternam invisit Apollo  
 instauratque choros, mixtique altaria circum 145  
 Cretesque Dryopesque fremunt pictique Agathyrsi;  
 ipse iugis Cynthi graditur mollique fluentem  
 fronde premit crinem fingens atque implicat auro,  
 tela sonant umeris: haud illo segnior ibat  
 Aeneas, tantum egregio decus enitet ore. 150  
 postquam altos ventum in montis atque invia lustra,  
 ecce ferae saxi deiectae vertice caprae  
 decurrere iugis; alia de parte patentis  
 transmittunt cursu campos atque agmina cervi  
 pulverulenta fuga glomerant montisque relinquunt. 155  
 at puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri  
 gaudet equo iamque hos cursu, iam praeterit illos,  
 spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis  
 optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.



**A**t the same time, the sky begins to be troubled by a mighty rumbling.  
Clouds heavy with hail appear. The scattered Tyrian party,  
The Trojan men and Venus' Dardan grandson,<sup>8</sup>  
Fearful of what is to come, seek cover here and there in the fields,  
As torrents stream from the mountains.  
Queen Dido and the Trojan leader find the same cavern.  
The mother Earth and Juno as matron of honour give the sign;  
By the lightning's fire, the heavens bear witness to the union and  
From mountain heights the Nymphs cry out the wedding chant.  
This day was the first cause of death and of the woe that followed.  
For no longer does show or fame sway Dido,  
Nor even thoughts of a secret love.  
She calls it marriage, and by that name covers over the wrong-doing.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> That is, Ascanius/Iulus.

<sup>9</sup> The language leaves the intentions and culpability of each of the actors — human and divine — in this drama ambiguous ; as is the nature and degree of Dido's 'fault'.

**I**nterea magno misceri murmure caelum 160  
incipit, insequitur commixta grandine nimbus,  
et Tyrii comites passim et Troiana iuventus  
Dardaniusque nepos Veneris diversa per agros  
tectata metu petiere; ruunt de montibus amnes.  
speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem 165  
deveniunt. prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno  
dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether  
conubiis summoque ulularunt vertice Nymphae.  
ille dies primus leti primusque malorum  
causa fuit; neque enim specie famave movetur 170  
nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:  
coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam.

Straight way the stories fly round the great cities of Libya,  
Rumour, of all evils is swiftest: it swells with speed and grows stronger.

Small at first, out of fear, it is soon carried by every breeze,  
Until it strides the earth with its head hidden in the clouds.  
Mother Earth, so they say, angered by the spite of the Gods,  
Gave birth to Rumour last, sister of the Titans Coeus and  
Enceladus:

Swift of foot, with nimble wings, a huge bristling monster,  
Who, for every feather of her body has a sleepless eye  
Hidden beneath and, wondrous to tell, as many tongues,  
As many noisy mouths and pricked-up ears.

By night she flies, mid-way between heaven and Earth,  
Screeching in the shadows, nor droops her eyes in sweet sleep.  
By day she stands guard on the high roof peaks or on lofty towers  
Striking fear into great cities, spreading twisted lies as truthful  
news.

She mischievously spread a dozen different stories among the  
people,

Repeating both facts and falsehoods.

Aeneas, born of Trojan blood, had come;

To whom, as her husband, lovely Dido deigned to join herself!

Now all winter long they warm each other in wantonness

And shameless passion, heedless of their kingdoms.

This is what the foul goddess spreads here and there in the  
mouths of men.

Then straightway she bends her course to King Iarbas,

To fire his sprit and swell his anger.

*E*xtemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes,  
Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum:  
mobilitate viget virisque adquirit eundo, 175  
parva metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras  
ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit.  
illam Terra parens ira irritata deorum  
extremam, ut perhibent, Coeo Enceladoque sororem  
progignuit pedibus celerem et pernicibus alis, 180  
monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae,  
tot vigiles oculi subter (mirabile dictu),  
tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris.  
nocte volat caeli medio terraeque per umbram  
stridens, nec dulci declinat lumina somno; 185  
luce sedet custos aut summi culmine tecti  
turribus aut altis, et magnas territat urbes,  
tam ficti praeque tenax quam nuntia veri.  
haec tum multiplici populos sermone replebat  
gaudens, et pariter facta atque infecta canebat: 190  
venisse Aenean Troiano sanguine cretum,  
cui se pulchra viro dignetur iungere Dido;  
nunc hiemem inter se luxu, quam longa, fovere  
regnorum immemores turpique cupidine captos.  
haec passim dea foeda virum diffundit in ora. 195  
protinus ad regem cursus detorquet Iarban  
incenditque animum dictis atque aggerat iras.

**H**e, sprung from Ammon's rape of a Libyan nymph,<sup>10</sup>  
Had erected a hundred vast temples to Jove  
Across the breadth of his kingdom,  
With a hundred altars where he consecrated  
Perpetual flames, the undying watchfires of the gods,  
Where the soil was fattened by the blood of beasts,  
And rich floral wreaths adorned the temple gates.  
This king, inflamed to madness by the bitter rumor,  
Prostrated himself, it is said, many times before the altars,  
And amid the divine presences raised his hands praying thus to  
Jupiter:

"Almighty Jupiter, to whom the Maurish peoples now  
From their embroidered couches pour out Bacchan offerings,  
Do you see these things? Is it in vain, great father,  
That we all are terrified when you hurl your bolts?  
Are those fires that once struck terror in everyone's hearts  
Now blinded by clouds, do they stir up empty rumour?  
This woman, wandering across our borders, to whom we gave  
A coastal strip to plough and local jurisdiction,  
Built a paltry city at a price. She spurned our offer of marriage,  
But now welcomes this Aeneas as lord of her kingdom!  
How comes it that this 'Paris', with his train of eunuchs<sup>11</sup>  
Sporting Lydian bonnets on their perfumed locks tied beneath  
their their chins,  
Enjoys the prize he stole from me? It seems we have  
Heaped your temples with wealth and sung your praises in vain!"

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<sup>10</sup> Ammon-Jove is a romanization of the Egyptian supreme god, Amun. There's something 'eastern' in Iarbas' bargaining with the Deity. In the earlier story of Dido, known to Romans before Vergil's version, Dido suicides on a pyre to escape marriage to Iarbas.

<sup>11</sup> Paris, prince of Troy, Priam's pretty dill of a son, had carried off Spartan Meneleus' wife, Helen, setting off the Trojan war. In the Illiad he is conspicuous for appearing more often in the sack than on the field of battle, and when he does so he is protected by the Goddess Aphrodite to whom he had given the prize in a famous beauty contest (that Juno/Hera lost!).

*H*ic Hammone satus rapta Garamantide nymp<sup>h</sup>a  
 templa Iovi centum latis immania regnis,  
 centum aras posuit vigilemque sacraverat ignem, 200  
 excubias divum aeternas, pecudumque cruore  
 pingue solum et variis florentia limina sertis.  
 isque amens animi et rumore accensus amaro  
 dicitur ante aras media inter numina divum  
 multa Iovem manibus supplex orasse supinis: 205  
 'Iuppiter omnipotens, cui nunc Maurusia pictis  
 gens epulata toris Lenaeum libat honorem,  
 aspicias haec? an te, genitor, cum fulmina torques  
 nequiquam horremus, caecique in nubibus ignes  
 terrificant animos et inania murmura miscent? 210  
 femina, quae nostris errans in finibus urbem  
 exiguam pretio posuit, cui litus arandum  
 cuique loci leges dedimus, conubia nostra  
 reppulit ac dominum Aenean in regna recepit.  
 et nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu, 215  
 Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem  
 subnexus, raptο potitur: nos munera templis  
 quippe tuis ferimus famamque fovemus inanem.'

Thus he prayed, grasping the corner of the altar  
The Almighty listened. He turned his gaze to the walls of  
the city  
And to the lovers who had forgotten their noble reputations.  
Then he spoke to Mercury and gave him these instructions:  
“Go now, son, call Zephyr and fly down on your wings<sup>12</sup>  
To the Dardan general, the Trojan who now dithers in Carthage<sup>13</sup>  
Ignoring the City destined for him by Fate’s decree.  
On the wings of swift breezes bring him my words.  
His lovely mother did not give Us her word  
Nor save him twice from the forces of Greece for this.  
No, it was so he might rule Italy,  
A land pregnant of empire and raging warfare  
And, championing the race born of Teucer’s noble blood,  
Bring the entire world under his dominion.  
Even if the glory of such great deeds does not excite him  
Nor he wishes to shoulder the burdens for his own renown,  
Should Ascanius’ father grudge his son the towers of Rome?  
What good is he doing? In what hope does he tarry among a  
hostile race  
Ignoring Italy’s lineage and the rich fields of Lavinia?  
Let him set sail! Let that be the message you give him from Us!”

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<sup>12</sup> Zephyros is the personification of the West wind.

<sup>13</sup> “Dardan” means “Trojan”: the people supposedly once ruled by Dardanus, an ancient king of the region around Troy. Vergil has Aeneas recount in Book III that the spirit of Dardanus revealed to him he is a direct ancestor of Aeneas and was originally from Hesperia (the ‘western land’ of Italy to which Aeneas is headed). This cover-version of the earlier Greek myth is presumably meant to strengthen Aeneas’ claim to the land.

*T*alibus orantem dictis arasque tenentem  
audii Omnipotens, oculosque ad moenia torsit 220  
regia et oblitos famaē melioris amantis.  
tum sic Mercurium adloquitur ac talia mandat:  
'vade age, nate, voca Zephyros et labere pennis  
Dardaniumque ducem, Tyria Karthagine qui nunc  
exspectat fatisque datas non respicit urbes, 225  
adloquere et celeris defer mea dicta per auras.  
non illum nobis genetrix pulcherrima talem  
promisit Graiūque ideo bis vindicat armis;  
sed fore qui gravidam imperiis belloque frementem  
Italiam regeret, genus alto a sanguine Teucri 230  
asser, ac totum sub leges mitteret orbem.  
si nulla accendit tantarum gloria rerum  
nec super ipse sua molitur laude laborem,  
Ascanione pater Romanas invidet arces?  
quid struit? aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur 235  
nec prolem Ausoniam et Lavinia respicit arva?  
naviget! haec summa est, hic nostri nuntius esto.'



**H**e ceased. The God got ready to do his great father's bidding,  
First he ties on his golden-winged sandals, which carried him  
Raised on high above earth and sea as speedily as the winds.  
Then he takes the wand he uses to summon the pale spirits of the  
Underworld; to banish others to the gloomy depths of hell;  
Grant or deny sleep, and; to unseal the eyelids of the dead.  
Trusting to this staff, he drives through the winds and skims the  
roiling clouds.  
And now he spies the peak and steep slopes of Atlas  
Who, toiling, supports the sky on his shoulders.  
The old Titan's pine-covered head is ever shrouded  
By black clouds and battered winds and rain; Drifts of snow  
Cover his shoulders and from his chin flow streams  
While his stiff beard bristles with ice.  
Here, poised on his wings, the Cyllenian alights and from there <sup>14</sup>  
Throws his whole body toward the waves like a bird that  
Swoops round the shores and round the low fishy cliffs,  
Skimming just above the waters. Thus cutting through the winds  
Coming from his mother, the child of old Cyllene,  
He flies between land and sky to the sandy shores of Libya.  
As soon as his winged feet touched the outskirts, he saw  
Aeneas founding the towers and raising new dwellings.<sup>15</sup>  
He bore a sword sparkling with tawny jasper and  
From his shoulders hung a Tryian cloak, ablaze with purple wool:  
Gifts that wealthy Dido had made for him, threading the warp of  
the cloth with gold.

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<sup>14</sup> Mercury was born on Mount Cyllenius in Arcadia: His father is Zeus/Jupiter, his mother is Maia — the oldest of the Pleiades (the brilliant constellation) — whose own father is the Titan Atlas who, here represented as the N African mountain range, holds the globe on his shoulders. Phew! Vergil's readers typically studied with Greek tutors when young; so they knew all this stuff.

<sup>15</sup> Rumor lies, therefore, to claim that Dido and Aeneas are luxuriating while "heedless of their kingdoms." Some commentators have noted that this is a rare glimpse in the Epic of Aeneas as a happy man.

*D*ixerat. ille patris magni parere parabat  
 imperio; et primum pedibus talaria nectit  
 aurea, quae sublimem alis sive aequora supra 240  
 seu terram rapido pariter cum flamine portant.  
 tum virgam capit: hac animas ille evocat Orco  
 pallentis, alias sub Tartara tristia mittit,  
 dat somnos adimitque, et lumina morte resignat.  
 illa fretus agit ventos et turbida tranat 245  
 nubila. iamque volans apicem et latera ardua cernit  
 Atlantis duri caelum qui vertice fulcit,  
 Atlantis, cinctum adsidue cui nubibus atris  
 piniferum caput et vento pulsatur et imbri,  
 nix umeros infusa tegit, tum flumina mento 250  
 praecipitant senis, et glacie riget horrida barba.  
 hic primum paribus nitens Cyllenius alis  
 constitit; hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas  
 misit avi similis, quae circum litora, circum  
 piscosos scopulos humilis volat aequora iuxta. 255  
 haud aliter terras inter caelumque volabat  
 litus harenosum ad Libyae, ventosque secabat  
 materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles.  
 ut primum alatis tetigit magalia plantis,  
 Aenean fundantem arces ac tecta novantem 260  
 conspicit. atque illi stellatus iaspide fulva  
 ensis erat Tyrioque ardebat murice laena  
 demissa ex umeris, dives quae munera Dido  
 fecerat, et tenui telas discreverat auro.

The God straightway assails him: "So now you now build the foundations

And fair places of lofty Carthage doing your wife's bidding!  
Forgetting your own kingdom and affairs! But He  
Who rules the gods and whose power sways the earth and sky  
Himself sent me from bright Olympus to you.  
He commands me, flying through the swift breezes, to bring you  
this charge:

"What do you think you are doing?

What do you hope to gain by wasting your time in Libyan lands?

If the glory of great deeds does not move you

[Nor do you care to build up fame for your own works]<sup>16</sup>

Then think of coming Ascanius and the promise of your heir  
Iulus,

To whom the throne of Italy and the territories of Rome are due."

As thus he spoke, the Cyllenian quit the sight of mortals,

And without waiting for reply, melted into thin air, far from sight

But, in truth, Aeneas, stunned by the vision, was struck dumb;  
His hair stood on end with fright and his voice stuck in his throat.

He was fired-up to flee and to quit the gladsome land,

Thunder-struck as he was by the divine commands.

But alas, what could he do? How could he get around the  
Infatuated queen? What did he dare say? Where could he begin?

His thoughts rushed rapidly first this way then that,

He was pulled in different directions and tossed among them all.

Among the alternatives, one seemed the better counsel:

He calls Mnesthus, Sergestus and brave Serestus

Quietly to ready the ships, to gather their troops at the shore,

Prepare the arms and to belie what reason there might be for

A change of plans.

He, meanwhile, since gracious Dido knew nothing of this,

And had no idea such great love might be broken,

Would try to find an approach and time

Gently to explain what seemed the right thing to do.

All gladly obey this commands and put his orders into effect.

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<sup>16</sup> *Spurious line.*

Continuo invadit: 'tu nunc Karthaginis altae      265  
 fundamenta locas pulchramque uxorius urbem  
 extruis? heu, regni rerumque oblite tuarum!  
 ipse deum tibi me claro demittit Olympo  
 regnator, caelum et terras qui numine torquet,  
 ipse haec ferre iubet celeris mandata per auras:      270  
 quid struis? aut qua spe Libycis teris otia terris?  
 si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum  
 [nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem,]  
 Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli  
 respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus      275  
 debetur.' tali Cyllenius ore locutus  
 mortalis visus medio sermone reliquit  
 et procul in tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram.

At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens,  
 arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit.      280  
 ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras,  
 attonitus tanto monitu imperioque deorum.  
 heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furem  
 audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?  
 atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc      285  
 in partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat.  
 haec alternanti potior sententia visa est:  
 Mnesthea Sergestumque vocat fortemque Serestum,  
 classem aptent taciti sociosque ad litora cogant,  
 arma parent et quae rebus sit causa novandis      290  
 dissimulent; sese interea, quando optima Dido  
 nesciat et tantos rumpi non speret amores,  
 temptaturum aditus et quae mollissima fandi  
 tempora, quis rebus dexter modus. ocius omnes  
 imperio laeti parent et iussa facessunt.      295

**B**ut the Queen saw through his deceit (who can fool a lover?)

And, fearing for safety in everything, had already guessed.  
She caught wind of his coming departure.

The same heartless rumor brought her the distressing news:

“The ships are armed and the voyage is ready!”

Out of control, on fire, she rages through the city.

Like the Bacchae when sacred rites of the God begin,

When fired up by the biennial cries of “O Bacchus”,

Fill the nightly orgies on Mt Cithearon with their screams:

So she calls out Aeneas first with these words:

“Traitor! Did you suppose you would get away with this?

Did you think you could quietly and basely sneak away?

Does not our love, the pledge once given,

Nor even a sentence of cruel death for Dido hold you here?

Do you launch your ships under winter skies, heartless one,

And set sail for the high seas in the midst of the Northern gales?

Even if Troy still existed and you were seeking

Not foreign fields or homes unknown, but to return to Troy,

Would you risk your ships in such stormy seas?

Do you flee from me? By these tears and my upraised hands —

Since, in my wretchedness, no other means is left me—

By our consent to wed, by the bed we shared, if I have deserved

Well from you, or if anything of mine has been sweet to you,

Take pity on a fallen House and, I beg you,

If there is still room for prayer, abandon this plan!

Because of you the Libyan tribes and the Numidian king hate me

The Tyrians are my foes. Because of you, my honor and my

Former glory by which, alone, I was approaching heaven,

Have been destroyed. To what fate, guest, (for that is all that

Remains of the name of ‘husband’) Do you abandon me,

A woman now doomed to die? How should I die?

When my brother Pygmalion tears down my city walls?

Or taken captive by Iarbas the Gaetulian?

At least, if I had some child of yours, born before you left,

Some little “Aeneas” who would play in my hall,

And whose look, at least, would still recall you,

I would not then see myself as taken and abandoned.”

**A**t regina dolos (quis fallere possit amantem?)  
praesensit, motusque excepit prima futuros  
omnia tuta timens. eadem impia Fama furenti  
detulit armari classem cursumque parari.  
saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem 300  
bacchatur, qualis commotis excita sacris  
Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho  
orgia nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron.  
tandem his Aenean compellat vocibus ultro:

dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum 305  
posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?  
nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam  
nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?  
quin etiam hiberno moliri sidere classem  
et mediis properas Aquilonibus ire per altum, 310  
crudelis? quid, si non arva aliena domosque  
ignotas peteres, et Troia antiqua maneret,  
Troia per undosum peteretur classibus aequor?

mene fugis? per ego has lacrimas dextramque tuam te  
(quando aliud mihi iam miserae nihil ipsa reliqui), 315  
per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos,  
si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam  
dulce meum, miserere domus labentis et istam,  
oro, si quis adhuc precibus locus, exue mentem.  
te propter Libycae gentes Nomadumque tyranni 320  
odere, infensi Tyrii; te propter eundem  
extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam,  
fama prior. cui me moribundam deseris hospes  
(hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?  
quid moror? an mea Pygmalion dum moenia frater 325  
destruat aut captam ducat Gaetulus Iarbas?  
saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset  
ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi parvulus aula  
luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,  
non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer.' 330

She fell silent. Aeneas, by Jove's command kept his gaze fixed. Struggling, he smothered the care in his heart, and briefly replied:

"Never will I deny, my Queen, that you deserve from me  
Even more than you claim on your own behalf.  
Nor will my memory of you, Elissa, ever be bitter;  
Not while I remember myself nor my breath still rules my limbs.  
As to the charges, I have little to say. I did not mean to slip away  
Furtively, much less fly — make no mistake. Nor did I ever  
Hold out the bridegroom's torch or join such a compact.  
If the fates had allowed me to lead my life by my own lights  
And to settle my love on whom I wished,  
My first care would have been the city of Troy,  
And the care of of my dear ones' remains.  
The high halls of Priam would stand again, had it been possible  
To resurrect Pergamon, by my own hand, for the vanquished.

But as it is, Apollo Gryneus and the Lycian oracles order me to<sup>17</sup>  
Seize my destiny in Italy. There is my love, there my country!  
If the sight of the Libyan city and the towers of Carthage  
Charm you, a Phoenician, how you can grudge the Trojans  
The land of Ausonia? It is our duty to seek a foreign kingdom.  
How often, when the dewey shadows of night cover the earth,  
And the fiery stars rise, father Anchises admonishes me  
In disturbing dreams! The thought of young Ascanius, too,  
Warns me against hurting those I love, depriving him of the  
Kingdom in the West and lands promised him by the fates.  
Now, on top of this, a messenger of the gods, sent by Jove himself  
(I swear on your head and mine) brings His commands  
Through the swift breezes. By the light of day I saw him appear  
Within our walls, and my ears drank in his words.  
Cease now to fire-up both yourself and me with your complaints.  
I have no choice but to go on to Italy!"

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<sup>17</sup> *It's a mystery when in his travels Aeneas might have consulted the Apollonian oracle at Grynium. This may be a literary reference we no longer understand.*

**D**ixerat. ille Iovis monitis immota tenebat  
lumina et obnixus curam sub corde premebat.  
tandem pauca refert: 'ego te, quae plurima fando  
enumerare vales, numquam, regina, negabo  
promeritam, nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae 335  
dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.  
pro re pauca loquar. neque ego hanc abscondere furto  
speravi (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam  
praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni.  
me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam 340  
auspiciis et sponte mea componere curas,  
urbem Troianam primum dulcisque meorum  
reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,  
et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.

sed nunc Italiam magnam Gryneus Apollo, 345  
Italiam Lyciae iussere capessere sortes;  
hic amor, haec patria est. si te Karthaginis arces  
Phoenissam Libycaeque aspectus detinet urbis,  
quae tandem Ausonia Teucros considerare terra  
invidia est? et nos fas extera quaerere regna. 350  
me patris Anchisae, quotiens umentibus umbris  
nox operit terras, quotiens astra ignea surgunt,  
admonet in somnis et turbida terret imago;  
me puer Ascanius capitisque iniuria cari,  
quem regno Hesperiae fraudo et fatalibus arvis. 355  
nunc etiam interpres divum Iove missus ab ipso  
(testor utrumque caput) celeris mandata per auras  
detulit: ipse deum manifesto in lumine vidi  
intransentem muros vocemque his auribus hausi.  
desine meque tuis incendere teque querelis; 360  
Italiam non sponte sequor.'



**D**uring all this speech Dido looked at him askance.  
Glancing here and there, she silently looked him over,  
Then burst out angrily: "You are not a child of the Goddess,  
False one, nor a descendant of Dardanus, but of the rugged, flinty  
Craggs of the Caucasus, where the Hyrcanian tigress suckled you.  
Why should I hide my feelings? Am I saving myself for some  
greater outrage?  
Did he sigh while I wept? Or even look at me?  
Was he overcome, did he weep or feel any pity for his lover?

Where shall I begin? Here and now let neither great Juno  
Nor the son of Saturn look on these things as righteous.  
Nowhere is faith rewarded. He was stranded on the shore,  
destitute,  
I took him in and, madly, gave him a share in my throne!  
I saved his lost fleet, rescued his crews from death —  
Oh I am burning with anger! — First it's the augury of Apollo,  
Then the Lycian oracle, now its an envoy sent by Jove himself  
Who carries awe-inspiring commands through the air!  
To be sure, this must be the work of the Gods above!  
My love disturbs their peace.  
I won't hold you! Nor will I bandy words with you!  
Be off! Follow the winds to Italy! Seek your kingdom across the  
seas!  
For my part, I hope, if ever the gods punish unrighteousness,  
You will drain agony's cup, stranded on the reefs, repeatedly  
calling the name of Dido.  
From far away I will pursue you with blackened brands, and as  
Chill death sucks the life from your limbs, my shade shall haunt  
you.  
You shall pay the penalty, wicked one! I will hear of it  
When the news arrives in the depths of the underworld."

So saying, she broke off in mid speech, and in anguish  
Fleeing the open air, turned from his sight and departed,  
Leaving him fearful and uncertain, with much still to say.  
Her maids support her fainting limbs and carrying her back  
To the palace, they duly lay her on her bed in her marble  
chamber.

**T**alia dicentem iamdudum aversa tuetur  
huc illuc volvens oculos totumque pererrat  
luminibus tacitis et sic accensa profatur:  
'nec tibi diva parens generis nec Dardanus auctor, 365  
perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens  
Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.  
nam quid dissimulo aut quae me ad maiora reservo?  
num fletu ingemuit nostro? num lumina flexit?  
num lacrimas victus dedit aut miseratus amantem est? 370

quae quibus anteferam? iam iam nec maxima Iuno  
nec Saturnius haec oculis pater aspicit aequis.  
nusquam tuta fides. eiectum litore, egentem  
excepi et regni demens in parte locavi.  
amissam classem, socios a morte reduxi 375  
(heu furiis incensa feror!): nunc augur Apollo,  
nunc Lyciae sortes, nunc et Iove missus ab ipso  
interpres divum fert horrida iussa per auras.  
scilicet is superis labor est, ea cura quietos  
sollicitat. neque te teneo neque dicta refello: 380  
i, sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas.  
spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt,  
supplicia hausurum scopulis et nomine Dido  
saepe vocaturum. sequar atris ignibus absens  
et, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus, 385  
omnibus umbra locis adero. dabis, improbe, poenas.  
audiam et haec Manis veniet mihi fama sub imos.'

his medium dictis sermonem abrumpit et auras  
aegra fugit seque ex oculis avertit et aufert,  
linquens multa metu cunctantem et multa parantem 390  
dicere. suscipiunt famulae conlapsaque membra  
marmoreo referunt thalamo stratisque reponunt.

**B**ut worthy Aeneas, although wishing to ease her sorrow  
By reassurance and to turn away her cares by his words;  
Although groaning much, his resolve shaken by strong love,  
Yet he submitted to the heavenly commands and returned to the  
fleet.

Now the Trojans really fell-to,  
Launching all the tall ships from the shore. The pitch-blackened  
Hulls are set afloat and the sailors, eager for flight,  
Bring oars still spouting leaves and masts of unworked oak.  
The upheaval of their departure can be seen all over the city,  
As if they were ants who, mindful of winter,  
Plunder a huge pile of grain, storing it under cover.  
Over the fields in blackened columns they march,  
Retrieving their booty through narrow tracks in the grass.  
The greater number struggle resolutely with the huge grains on  
Their shoulders, others urge-on the troops and rebuke delay.  
The trail is aglow with the work.

What then did you feel, Dido, seeing all this?  
Whom did your sighs avail, when you saw  
From the top of your tall palace, before your eyes,  
The the broad shores lit up and the whole sea astir with loud  
cries?

Oh shameful love, to what will you not drive human hearts!  
Yet again she is in tears, yet again she thinks of winning him back  
By pleas, humbly bowing down to Love,  
Lest, by leaving anything untried, she should die in vain.

**A**t pius Aeneas, quamquam lenire dolentem  
solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,  
multa gemens magnoque animum labefactus amore  
iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit. 396

tum vero Teucri incumbunt et litore celsas  
deducunt toto navis. natat uncta carina,  
frondentisque ferunt remos et robora silvis  
infabricata fugae studio. 400

migrantis cernas totaque ex urbe ruentis:  
ac velut ingentem formicae farris acervum  
cum populant hiemis memores tectoque reponunt,  
it nigrum campis agmen praedamque per herbas  
convectant calle angusto; pars grandia trudunt 405  
obnixae frumenta umeris, pars agmina cogunt  
castigantque moras, opere omnis semita fervet.

quis tibi tum, Dido, cernenti talia sensus,  
quosve dabas gemitus, cum litora fervere late  
prospiceres arce ex summa, totumque videres 410  
misceri ante oculos tantis clamoribus aequor!

improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis!  
ire iterum in lacrimas, iterum temptare precando  
cogitur et supplex animos summittere amanti,  
ne quid inexpertum frustra moritura relinquat. 415

“**A**nna, you see all of this commotion around the shore:  
From all sides they gather; the canvas now beckons the  
breeze,  
The sailors hang garlands on the bows,  
If I had the strength to foresee such great sorrow, sister,  
I should be able to bear it, too. Still, Anna,  
For the sake of my unhappiness, do this one thing for me:  
For this traitor used to care for you alone,  
Even to confide his innermost feelings to you.  
You, alone, will know the best time to work on his feelings.  
Go then, sister, and speak humbly to this proud foe.  
Tell him I never conspired with the Greeks at Aulis  
Or sent a fleet to Pergamum to exterminate the Trojan race,  
Nor to disturb the ashes or ghost of father Anchises.  
Why then will his stubborn ears not hear my pleas?  
Where is he rushing to? Let him allow unhappy love a last boon;  
Let him wait for a following wind and an easy flight.  
I no longer hope for our bygone union that he has foresworn,  
Nor wish him to forfeit his fair Latium or abandon his realm:  
I seek only the time and space to recover from my passion,  
While fortune teaches me to grieve for my defeated hopes!  
For this I last indulgence I beg — pity your sister —  
And should he grant it, in death I will repay with interest.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It's not quite clear what Dido means by this last remark. It's possible to construe it as "I will repay Aeneas by my death". Or, perhaps it should be "after my death"; meaning that if Aeneas grants her request she will withdraw the curse she placed on him earlier and would abstain from the more elaborate curse to come (ll. 607 ff).

**A**nna, vides toto properari litore circum:  
undique convenere; vocat iam carbasus auras,  
puppibus et laeti nautae imposuere coronas.  
hunc ego si potui tantum sperare dolorem,  
et perferre, soror, potero. miserae hoc tamen unum 420  
exsequere, Anna, mihi; solam nam perfidus ille  
te colere, arcanos etiam tibi credere sensus;  
sola viri mollis aditus et tempora noras.  
i, soror, atque hostem supplex adfare superbum:  
non ego cum Danaïs Troianam exscindere gentem 425  
Aulide iuravi classemve ad Pergama misi,  
nec patris Anchisae cinerem manisve revelli:  
cur mea dicta negat duras demittere in auris?  
quo ruit? extremum hoc miserae det munus amanti:  
expectet facilemque fugam ventosque ferentis. 430  
non iam coniugium antiquum, quod prodidit, oro,  
nec pulchro ut Latio careat regnumque relinquat:  
tempus inane peto, requiem spatiumque furori,  
dum mea me victam doceat fortuna dolere.  
extremam hanc oro veniam (miserere sororis), 435  
quam mihi cum dederit cumulatam morte remittam.'

So she begged. Her unhappy sister conveyed again and again  
Her tearful pleas. But Aeneas was unmoved by any of it.  
Nothing he heard of words or weeping weakened his resolve.  
The fates opposed and the god sealed his mortal ears in calm.  
As when the North winds wrestle with one another  
To buffet the full-grown Alpine oaks with gales.  
A roar comes and the high branches, smashing together,  
Strew the ground with leafy stakes.  
But they cling to the cliffs for, as high as they reach to the winds  
Of Heaven, so deep are they rooted in the depths of Hell.  
No less stalwart, the hero may be pummelled by this or that plea  
And feel concern in his mighty heart;  
But he holds to his plan unmoved, and tears fall in vain. <sup>19</sup>

Now, at last, unhappy Dido, aghast at her doom,  
Weary of gazing on the orb of heaven, prays for death.  
So she might better carry out this counsel and quit the light,  
She sees, as she places gifts on the incense burning altars,  
(Horrible to tell) the holy waters darken  
And the offering of wine turn into repulsive gore.  
She tells none of this vision, not even her own sister.  
There was, as it happens, in her marble palace, a shrine to  
Her long-dead husband, that she adorned with wondrous honors  
Wreathing it with shining fleeces and festive fronds.  
Here, when the shades of night envelop the earth  
And a solitary owl moans from the roof-tops,  
Giving out its funereal song at length in a tearful tone  
She sometimes heard voices, the words of her husband calling,  
And, as well, the many sayings of the old seers  
Horrify her with terrible warnings. Then, in her dreams,  
Fierce Aeneas himself pursues her. Abandoned, always alone,  
She finds herself, without companions, frenziedly travelling  
Far across a forlorn country, searching for her Tyrians.  
As when terrified Pentheus flees the Furies' troop  
And thinks he sees a twin sun and a doubled Thebes.  
Or when Agamemnon's son, Orestes, flees across the stage  
Chased by his mother armed with torches and black serpents,  
While the vengeful Harpies crouch in the wings.

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<sup>19</sup> *Whose tears? It's not clear: the preceding simile might suggest Aeneas'. But earlier, and afterwards the tears are Dido's. This passage has been much debated.*

**T**alibus orabat, talisque miserrima fletus  
fertque refertque soror. sed nullis ille movetur  
fletibus aut voces ullas tractabilis audit;  
fata obstant placidasque viri deus obstruit auris. 440  
ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum  
Alpini Boreae nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc  
erueri inter se certant; it stridor, et altae  
consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes;  
ipsa haeret scopulis et quantum vertice ad auras 445  
aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit:  
haud secus adsiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros  
tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas;  
mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes.

Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido 450  
mortem orat; taedet caeli convexa tueri.  
quo magis inceptum peragat lucemque relinquat,  
vidit, turicremis cum dona imponeret aris,  
(horrendum dictu) latices nigrescere sacros  
fusaque in obscenum se vertere vina cruorem; 455  
hoc visum nulli, non ipsi effata sorori.  
praeterea fuit in tectis de marmore templum  
coniugis antiqui, miro quod honore colebat,  
velleribus niveis et festa fronde revinctum:  
hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis 460  
visa viri, nox cum terras obscura teneret,  
solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo  
saepe queri et longas in fletum ducere voces;  
multaque praeterea vatum praedicta priorum  
terribili monitu horrificant. agit ipse furentem 465  
in somnis ferus Aeneas, semperque relinqui  
sola sibi, semper longam incommitata videtur  
ire viam et Tyrios deserta quaerere terra,  
Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus  
et solem geminum et duplices se ostendere Thebas, 470  
aut Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes,  
armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris  
cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae.



Thus, sized by madness and overcome by grief,  
Dido decides to die. She settles the time and means in her  
own heart

Then approaches her sorrowful sister with an expression that  
Seems bright and hopeful, masking her decision. She says:  
“My sister, I have found a way (rejoice with me), either  
To bring him back to me or to release me from my love of him.

The bounds of Ocean and the place of the setting sun are found  
In the far land of the Ethiops, where the giant Atlas  
Bears the heavens, studded with burning stars, on his shoulders.  
A Massylian priestess from there has been pointed out to me:  
A guardian in the grove of the Hesperides, she fed the dragons,  
Sprinkling over them moist honey and sleep-giving poppy,  
And kept safe the sacred rites of the Golden Apples.

This priestess claims, by her spells, to set free the hearts  
Of those she favours but to inflict love's torment on others;  
She can halt streams in their flood and turn back the stars on  
their courses;  
She raises the Spirits by night: you feel the earth low like a beast  
Under your feet and see the mountain ash descend to the plain.

I call on heaven and you, sister, to witness by your dear life  
That I arm myself unwillingly with this magic art.  
Do you, privately, make a funeral pyre in the inner court  
Under the open skies, placing on top the arms  
That treacherous man left hanging in the bridal chamber,  
All the garments he shed, and the bridal bed where I was ruined.  
It would please me, and the priestess so directs, to eliminate  
At once all memories connected with that villainous man.”  
She fell silent after saying this, while a pallor rose on her  
Features. Still, Anna did not see that her sister  
Was devising her own funeral rites, nor understood  
The great frenzy of her mind, nor feared it was more  
Than she had suffered from the death of Sychaeus.  
Accordingly, she carried out her wishes.

*E*rgo ubi concepit furias evicta dolore  
decrevitque mori, tempus secum ipsa modumque 475  
exigit, et maestam dictis adgressa sororem  
consilium vultu tegit ac spem fronte serenat:  
'inveni, germana, viam (gratare sorori)  
quae mihi reddat eum vel eo me solvat amantem.

Oceani finem iuxta solemque cadentem 480  
ultimus Aethiopum locus est, ubi maximus Atlas  
axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum:  
hinc mihi Massylae gentis monstrata sacerdos,  
Hesperidum templi custos, epulasque draconi 485  
quae dabat et sacros servabat in arbore ramos,  
spargens umida mella soporiferumque papaver.  
haec se carminibus promittit solvere mentes  
quas velit, ast aliis duras immittere curas,  
sistere aquam fluviiis et vertere sidera retro, 490  
nocturnosque movet Manis: mugire videbis  
sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos.

testor, cara, deos et te, germana, tuumque  
dulce caput, magicas invitam accingier artis.  
tu secreta pyram tecto interiore sub auras  
erige, et arma viri thalamo quae fixa reliquit 495  
impius exuviasque omnis lectumque iugalem,  
quo perii, super imponas: abolere nefandi  
cuncta viri monimenta iuvat monstratque sacerdos.'  
haec effata silet, pallor simul occupat ora.  
non tamen Anna novis praetexere funera sacris 500  
germanam credit, nec tantos mente furores  
concipit aut graviora timet quam morte Sychaei.  
ergo iussa parat.

**B**ut the Queen, when the pyre had been built from logs  
of pine and oak

In the open air of an inner courtyard of her palace,  
Adorns the space with wreaths crowned with funeral fronds;  
On the top she places, on the couch, his clothes, the blade he left  
behind,

And also an image of him, knowing well what was to come.  
The priestess with hair dishevelled, standing by the altar,  
In chant thrice a hundred times invokes the gods of Erebus and  
Chaos,

And the threefold Hecate who with Diana has three maiden  
faces.<sup>20</sup>

She had sprinkled water recalling the fountains of Avernus;  
By Moonlight she harvested sap-filled herbs, black with  
poisonous milk,

That she cut with bronze scythes and she sought out the caul  
Of a newborn foal, torn from its forehead, preempting the love of  
its dam.<sup>21</sup>

Dido herself holding the salted meal in hands cupped in prayer,  
— Untying the sandal on one foot and with her robe unbound<sup>22</sup> —  
Calls on the Gods and on the stars as witness to her approaching  
death.

Then she prays to any spirit of justice and remembrance  
Whose care is lovers joined in an unequal pact.

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<sup>20</sup> The same Goddess was Luna/Selene in heaven, Diana/Artemis on the earth and Hecate — Goddess of Magic — in hell, embodying the three phases of the Moon. Their symbol was a figure with three faces, usually erected at crossroads that were associated with magic and ghosts

<sup>21</sup> The 'hippomanes' (lit. 'horse spirit') was a reputed love filtre. It may have been a piece of the caul (as I have translated it: the text is ambiguous) because the mare was said to eat it shortly after the birth if found and, if not, to ignore the newborn and refuse to feed it. The most plausible explanation is that oxytocin in the caul would help with the mare's milk let-down.

<sup>22</sup> "One shoe off and one shoe on..." These are some of the rituals of Roman magic.

**A**t regina, pyra penetrali in sede sub auras  
 erecta ingenti taedis atque ilice secta, 505  
 intenditque locum sertis et fronde coronat  
 funerea; super exuvias ensemque relictum  
 effigiemque toro locat haud ignara futuri.  
 stant arae circum et crinis effusa sacerdos  
 ter centum tonat ore deos, Erebumque Chaosque 510  
 tergeminamque Hecaten, tria virginis ora Dianae.  
 sparserat et latices simulatos fontis Averni,  
 falcibus et messae ad lunam quaeruntur aenis  
 pubentes herbae nigri cum lacte veneni;  
 quaeritur et nascentis equi de fronte revulsus 515  
 et matri praereptus amor.  
 ipsa mola manibusque pías altaria iuxta  
 unum exuta pedem vinclis, in veste recincta,  
 testatur moritura deos et conscia fati  
 sidera; tum, si quod non aequo foedere amantis 520  
 curae numen habet iustumque memorque, precatur.

**I**t was night; through all the lands weary bodies sought rest,  
The forests and wild seas grew calm,  
While the stars wheeled mid-way on their courses.  
Now all the fields grew quiet as the livestock and the gaily-  
colored birds,  
Whether on the broad waters of calm lakes, or in the rough  
countryside hedges, settled to sleep through the silent dark.  
[They soothe cares and empty the mind of troubles.]<sup>23</sup>  
But the Phoenician Queen, sore at heart, cannot rest;  
Nor sink to sleep or allow night to fill her eyes or breast.  
Her woes redouble. Over and again love surges to rend  
And to toss her on a mighty tide of passion.

She starts earnestly to debate with herself in her heart:  
“What then am I doing? Should I try again my former lovers  
At the cost of being mocked, or on my knees seek marriage  
With the Numidian whom I have, until now, so often  
Scorned as a husband? Should I, instead, submit to the extremest  
Demands of the Trojans and follow the Illian fleet?  
Should I do so because he must be grateful for the help I gave  
And favours once done linger in his memory?  
Still, supposing that I were to wish it, would he allow me,  
Whom he hates, to board those haughty barges?  
Ah lost one! Do you neither see nor yet understand the treachery  
Of Laomedon’s race? What then? Shall I accompany  
The exulting sailors in their flight on my own?  
Or shall I follow the Trojans, hemmed by all my Tryrian band,  
Who were scarce able to tear themselves from Sidon’s shores,  
Dragging them back to the sea and ordering them to set sail?

No, die as you deserve and banish sorrow by the sword!  
You, sister, moved by my tears, were the first to burden me  
With this evil in my madness and to throw me to the enemy.  
Why could I not spend a blameless life, one without marriage,  
Like the creatures of the wild, without knowing such cares?  
I have not kept faith with the promises made to Sychaeus’ ashes!”

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<sup>23</sup> *Spurious line*

**N**ox erat et placidum carpebant fessa soporem  
corpora per terras, silvaeque et saeva quierant  
aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,  
cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres, 525  
quaeque lacus late liquidos quaeque aspera dumis  
rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.  
[lenibant curas et corda oblita laborum.]  
at non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam  
solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem 530  
accipit: ingeminant curae rursusque resurgens  
saevit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.

sic adeo insistit secumque ita corde volutat:  
'en, quid ago? rursusque procus inrisa priores  
experiar? Nomadumque petam conubia supplex, 535  
quos ego sim totiens iam dedignata maritos?  
Iliacas igitur classis atque ultima Teucrum  
iussa sequar? quiane auxilio iuvat ante levatos  
et bene apud memores veteris stat gratia facti?  
quis me autem, fac velle, sinet ratibusve superbis 540  
invisam accipiet? nescis heu, perdita, necdum  
Laomedontaeae sentis periuria gentis?  
quid tum? sola fuga nautas comitabor ovantis?  
an Tyriis omnique manu stipata meorum  
inferar et, quos Sidonia vix urbe revelli, 545  
rursus agam pelago et ventis dare vela iubebo?

quin morere ut merita es, ferroque averte dolorem.  
tu lacrimis evicta meis, tu prima furem  
his, germana, malis oneras atque obicis hosti.  
non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam 550  
degere more ferae, talis nec tangere curas;  
non servata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo.'

Such were the many doubts that erupted in her heart.  
Aeneas in the high stern of the ship, now decided on  
departure,

And when everything was properly prepared, grabbed some  
Sleep. In his dreams a vision of the God came back again  
Looking just like Mercury: the same voice, complexion,  
Flaxen hair and youthful build and, wearing the same expression,  
To give him this warning:

“Son of the Goddess, how can you sleep, madman,  
Neither seeing the danger that henceforth surrounds you, nor  
Hearing when Zephyr blows a favorable wind?

The Queen, tossed on a changing swell of passion, certain of  
Death, turns over in her mind foul craft and dire crimes.

Why do you not flee while rapid flight is still possible?

If you still tarry here as Dawn touches the horizon

You will see the sea churn with hostile craft, torches alight.

Then you will see the shores ablaze with fires.

So listen-up! Get going! Break off this delay!

Womankind is ever fickle and changeable!”

After saying this, the God withdrew into the black of night.

**T**antos illa suo rumpebat pectore questus:  
Aeneas celsa in puppi iam certus eundi  
carpebat somnos rebus iam rite paratis. 555  
huic se forma dei vultu redeuntis eodem  
obtulit in somnis rursusque ita visa monere est,  
omnia Mercurio similis, vocemque coloremque  
et crinis flavos et membra decora iuventa:  
'nate dea, potes hoc sub casu ducere somnos, 560  
nec quae te circum stent deinde pericula cernis,  
demens, nec Zephyros audis spirare secundos?  
illa dolos dirumque nefas in pectore versat  
certa mori, variosque irarum concitat aestus.  
non fugis hinc praeceps, dum praecipitare potestas? 565  
iam mare turbari trabibus saevasque videbis  
conlucere faces, iam fervere litora flammis,  
si te his attigerit terris Aurora morantem.  
heia age, rumpe moras. varium et mutabile semper  
femina.' sic fatus nocti se immiscuit atrae. 570



Aeneas, then truly startled by the sudden phantom,  
Tore himself from sleep, ordering his companions quickly  
to work:

“Wake up my men! Get to the rowing benches!  
Quickly, spread the sails! Behold a god,  
Sent from the heavens, once again urges us  
To hasten our departure and to cut loose the cables.  
We do as you command, O revered god, whomever you may be<sup>24</sup>,  
We gladly ready ourselves again to follow your commands.  
O be with us, kindly guide us, and in the heavens fix friendly  
stars!”

So saying he pulled the flashing blade from its scabbard  
And with its iron cut the taught hawsers.  
The same zeal takes all the men at once. Springing to it,  
They hurry get under way. The ships quit the shores,  
While the deep blue seas beneath their keels  
Sparkled with the spume thrown up by the skimming oars.

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<sup>24</sup> Of course it was Mercury again, as Aeneas well knows. But in Roman fable it was safer not to assume that one knew the name of the divine being who appeared in case you made an error and gave offense. So these circumlocutions are common.

**T**um vero Aeneas subitis exterritus umbris  
corripit e somno corpus sociosque fatigat  
praecipitis: 'vigilate, viri, et considite transtris;  
solvite vela citi. deus aethere missus ab alto  
festinare fugam tortosque incidere funis 575  
ecce iterum instimulat. sequimur te, sancte deorum,  
quisquis es, imperioque iterum paremus ovantes.  
adsis o placidusque iuves et sidera caelo  
dextra feras.' dixit vaginaque eripit ensem  
fulmineum strictoque ferit retinacula ferro. 580  
idem omnis simul ardor habet, rapiuntque ruuntque;  
litora deseruere, latet sub classibus aequor,  
adnixi torquent spumas et caerula verrunt.

**N**ow Aurora arose from Tithonus's saffron-colored bed  
And once more sprayed rays of light across the lands.  
As soon as she saw the pale light begin to spread,  
The Queen saw the ships leaving under sails evenly spread  
And realized the shore and port were empty of galleys!  
Thrice and four times she struck her lovely breast with her fists  
And tore at her auburn locks. "Oh great God" she cried  
Shall he get away? Does the intruder thus mock our realm?  
Why have they not dispatched armed men from the city  
To pursue them? Why have others not torn ships from the docks?  
Go, quickly bring fire, pass out the weapons, jump to the oars!

What am I saying? Where am I? What insanity has seized my mind?

Unhappy Dido, are his unworthy deeds only now apparent to you?<sup>25</sup>

You should have seen them earlier, when you handed him your sceptre

And even pledged your troth to him who, they said, bought with

Him the household of his fathers and carried his ailing

Aged parent on his shoulders! Would it not have been possible

To shred his body and cast the pieces into the waves?

Could you not have put his companions and Ascanius himself

To the sword and heaped a feast of his flesh on his father's table?

True, the outcome of the battle would always be uncertain.

So be it: whom should I, bound to die, have feared?

I should have bought torches into his camp and

Filled the belly of his ship with flames, extinguishing fathers,

Sons, their whole kind.

Then I would have thrown myself on top of it all."

---

<sup>25</sup> There has long been a debate about the "unworthy deeds" in this phrase. I have used the pronoun "his..." but the Latin text is ambiguous. It is possible Dido is referring to her 'betrayal' of Sychaeus here. But it makes more sense in the context of the rest of the scene to suppose Dido is referring to the story that Aeneas was able to escape Troy only because he betrayed the city to the Greeks (Turnus uses this story to goad Aeneas in the last book of the epic). Dido may be cursing herself for not seeing through the account Aeneas gave at the banquet she offered in Book II.

*E*t iam prima novo spargebat lumine terras  
Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile. 585  
regina e speculis ut primam albescere lucem  
vidit et aequatis classem procedere velis,  
litoraue et vacuos sensit sine remige portus,  
terque quaterque manu pectus percussa decorum  
flaventisque abscissa comas 'pro Iuppiter! ibit 590  
hic,' ait 'et nostris inluserit advena regnis?  
non arma expedient totaque ex urbe sequentur,  
diripientque rates alii navalibus? ite,  
ferte citi flammās, date tela, impellite remos!

quid loquor? aut ubi sum? quae mentem insania mutat? 595  
infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?  
tum decuit, cum sceptrā dabas. en dextra fidesque,  
quem secum patrios aiunt portare penatis,  
quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem!  
non potui abreptum divellere corpus et undis 600  
spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumere ferro  
Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?  
verum anceps pugnae fuerat fortuna. fuisset:  
quem metui moritura? faces in castra tulissem  
implessemque foros flammis natumque patremque 605  
cum genere exstinxem, memet super ipsa dedissem.

“O Sun, who lights the works of all the world with your flames,  
And you Juno, who are witness and go-between in my troubles,  
And you, Hecate, worshiped nightly with wails at the crossings of the town,  
And you, the vengeful Furies and the gods of Elissa’s death,  
Hear me! Turn your divine attention to the wrongs that  
Have deserved it and accept my prayers!  
If it is necessary that accursed man should sail away  
And reach his destination because the fates demand this of Jove,  
That boundary stone is fixed. But let the bold inhabitants  
Driven to war and to arms, expel him from their borders,  
So, turned away from Iulus’ embrace, let him plead for help  
And in bitterness witness the slaughter of his companions.  
Nor, when he submits himself to a humiliating peace, may the  
Light of heaven favour his reign. Let him die before his time,  
And in the midst of the sands let him lie, unburied.<sup>26</sup>

This I pray, and pour out my blood with these last words.  
Then do you, my Tyrians, despise the race and all its descendants!  
Let this be the tribute you offer to my ashes. Let there be  
No friendship with that people or treaties of peace.  
Let another avenger of our bones arise who,  
Now and in future ages, may gather the strength  
To pursue the Trojan settlers with sword and flame.  
May shore clash with shore, I pray,  
Waves with waves, arms with arms;  
And let our children’s own children do battle!”

---

<sup>26</sup> Those about to die are gifted with prophesy. All of Dido’s curses come to pass including the final — and apparently most terrible — that Aeneas’ body will never be found and he will never receive burial rites. But none of these curses will have quite the result Dido hopes. Irony is ever the counter-weight of prophesy.

**S**ol, qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustras,  
tuque harum interpret curarum et conscia Iuno,  
nocturnisque Hecate triviis ululata per urbes  
et Dirae ultrices et di morientis Elissae, 610  
accipite haec, meritumque malis advertite numen  
et nostras audite preces. si tangere portus  
infandum caput ac terris adnare necesse est,  
et sic fata Iovis poscunt, hic terminus haeret,  
at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis, 615  
finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli  
auxilium imploret videatque indigna suorum  
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae  
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,  
sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena. 620

haec precor, hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.  
tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum  
exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro  
munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt.  
exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor 625  
qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,  
nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.  
litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas  
imprecor, arma armis: pugnent ipsique nepotesque.

So she spoke, and turned her whole attention to finding  
The first opportunity, to end her hateful life.

Then she spoke briefly to Barce, Sychaeus's nurse,  
She who kept his black ashes in the old country.

"Dear Nurse, bring my sister Anna to me,  
Tell her to sprinkle her body with the cleansing river waters,  
And to bring with her the beasts and the expiatory offerings.  
When she comes, you too must don the required holy bands.  
I have prepared to undertake the sacred rites of Stygian Jove;  
I have made up my mind to put an end to my cares,  
By giving over that Dardan wretch's pyre to the flames."  
At her command the old woman bustled away.

Then shaking and maddened by her awful purpose,  
Rolling her bloodshot eyes, her trembling cheeks infused with  
stains, and pale from her approaching death,  
She bursts into the inner courtyard of the house and  
Scrambling, furiously climbs to the top of the pyre and  
Unsheathes the Dardan sword, a gift not sought for this purpose.  
Here, when she saw the Trojan's clothes and the familiar  
Marriage bed, she paused a moment in tearful thought,  
Then lay down on the couch and uttered these last words:

**H**aec ait, et partis animum versabat in omnis, 630  
invisam quaerens quam primum abrumper lucem.  
tum breviter Barcen nutricem adfata Sychaei,  
namque suam patria antiqua cinis ater habebat:  
'Annam, cara mihi nutrix, huc siste sororem:  
dic corpus properet fluviali spargere lympha, 635  
et pecudes secum et monstrata piacula ducat.  
sic veniat, tuque ipsa pia tege tempora vitta.  
sacra Iovi Stygio, quae rite incepta paravi,  
perficere est animus finemque imponere curis  
Dardaniique rogum capitis permittere flammae.' 640  
sic ait. illa gradum studio celebrabat anili.

at trepida et coeptis immanibus effera Dido  
sanguineam volvens aciem, maculisque tremantis  
interfusa genas et pallida morte futura,  
interiora domus inrumpit limina et altos 645  
conscendit furibunda rogos ensemque recludit  
Dardanium, non hos quaesitum munus in usus.  
hic, postquam Iliacas vestis notumque cubile  
conspexit, paulum lacrimis et mente morata  
incubuitque toro dixitque novissima verba: 650



“O relicts once dear to me while Fate and the Gods allowed!  
Receive this soul and release me from my cares!  
I have lived my life and pursued the path that Fortune  
dictated,  
Now my shade shall go, proudly, beneath the earth.  
I build a famous city, and saw my walls rise,  
I avenged my husband and punished my hostile brother,  
But happy, immensely more happy, would I be  
Had the Trojan keels never touched our shores!”

When she said this she pressed a kiss on the couch,  
“I die unavenged but, still I die.  
Thus... thus am I forced to go to the shades below.  
Let the Trojan with his cruel eyes drain this draught of fire  
From the deep, and carry the omens to his death.”  
So she spoke and her companions saw her right away fall on the  
sword and saw the blade spray bloody gore on her hands.

Now cries are raised to the high roofs and Rumor  
Rushes wildly through the startled town.  
The heavens resound with loud lamentation and the groans of  
Distress and the wailing of women shakes the houses.  
Just as if, overwhelmed by their enemies, all of Carthage or  
Ancient Tyre had fallen and uncontrollable flames  
Rolled over the roofs, whether of men or the gods.

**D**ulces exuviae, dum fata deusque sinebat,  
accipite hanc animam meque his exsolvite curis.  
vixi et quem dederat cursum Fortuna peregi,  
et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.  
urbem praeclaram statui, mea moenia vidi, 655  
ulta virum poenas inimico a fratre recepi,  
felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum  
numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae.'

dixit, et os impressa toro 'moriemur inultae,  
sed moriamur' ait. 'sic, sic iuvat ire sub umbras. 660  
hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto  
Dardanus, et nostrae secum ferat omina mortis.'

dixerat, atque illam media inter talia ferro  
conlapsam aspiciunt comites, enseque cruore  
spumantem sparsasque manus. it clamor ad alta 665  
atria: concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem.  
lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu  
tectis fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether,  
non aliter quam si immissis ruat hostibus omnis  
Karthago aut antiqua Tyros, flammaeque furentes 670  
culmina perque hominum volvantur perque deorum.

Swooning, her sister heard the clamor. Terrified, trembling,  
Tearing her face with her nails and beating her breast  
She rushes through the midst of the tumult, calling the  
dying woman by name.

“Was this your purpose sister? Did you mean to deceive me?  
Should I have seen this as a pyre, when they prepared the fire and  
altars?

What should I, forlorn, mourn first? Why did you spurn  
Your sister’s company to die? You should have called me to the  
same fate, to suffer the same sorry knife at the same hour.  
Did I build the pyre with these hands, and did I call on the god of  
our fathers

So I might lay you out for burial when you were dead, cruel one?”

“You have extinguished me with you, sister, and  
The people and the fathers of Sidon and your city.

Allow me to wash her wounds with water,  
And take the last breath of her mouth, if still it lingers over her.”

So saying she climbs the steps to the top of the pyre,  
And sighing draws her half-dead sister to her breast in an  
Embrace, and with a sob, wipes the black blood from her gown.  
The Queen tries to lift her heavy gaze but swoons once more;  
The wound in her breast gurgles blood from the buried knife.  
Three times, supporting herself on the bed, she tries to lift,  
But three times she falls back on the couch and with wandering  
eyes  
Seeks the light of the heavens above, groaning when she finds it.

**A**udiit exanimis trepidoque exterrita cursu  
unguibus ora soror foedans et pectora pugnis  
per medios ruit, ac morientem nomine clamat:  
'hoc illud, germana, fuit? me fraude petebas? 675  
hoc rogos iste mihi, hoc ignes araeque parabant?  
quid primum deserta querar? comitemne sororem  
sprexisti moriens? eadem me ad fata vocasses,  
idem ambas ferro dolor atque eadem hora tulisset.  
his etiam struxi manibus patriosque vocavi 680  
voce deos, sic te ut posita, crudelis, abessem?  
extincti te meque, soror, populumque patresque  
Sidonios urbemque tuam. date, vulnera lymphis  
abluam et, extremus si quis super halitus errat,  
ore legam.'

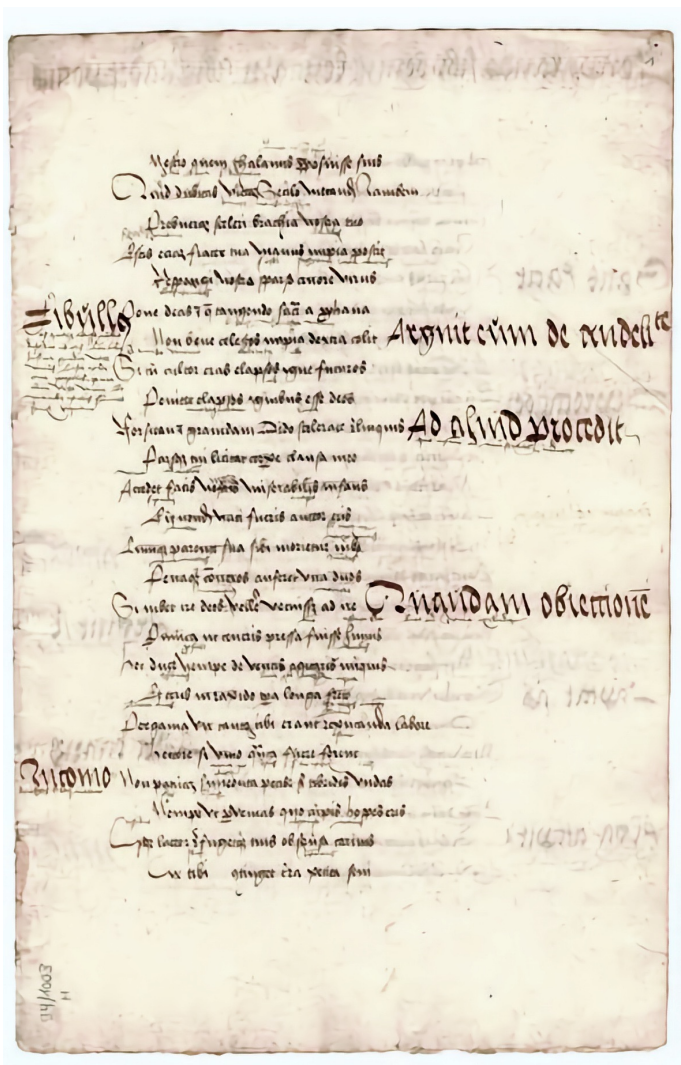
sic fata gradus evaserat altos, 685  
semianimemque sinu germanam amplexa fovebat  
cum gemitu atque atros siccabat veste cruores.  
illa gravis oculos conata attollere rursus  
deficit; infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus.  
ter sese attollens cubitoque adnixa levavit, 690  
ter revoluta toro est oculisque errantibus alto  
quaesivit caelo lucem ingemuitque reperta.

Then almighty Juno, taking pity on her prolonged pain  
And on her hard end, sends Iris down from Olympus  
To release the struggling soul from the limbs that bound it  
Because she perished neither by fate nor by deserving age,  
But unhappily before her time and suddenly inflamed by  
madness,  
Proserpina would not yet take a lock of her auburn hair,  
Or consign her soul to Sytigan Orcus.  
Therefore golden Iris flies down on dewy wings,  
Trailing a thousand different colors across the sky,  
And alights by her head. "These locks, sacred to Dis,  
I cut as commanded, and thus set you free from your body."  
So saying, she shears the curl with her right hand;  
Then, all at once, the warmth departed the Queen's body,  
And her life passed into the winds.



*T*um Iuno omnipotens longum miserata dolorem  
difficilisque obitus Irim demisit Olympo  
quae luctantem animam nexosque resolveret artus. 695  
nam quia nec fato merita nec morte peribat,  
sed misera ante diem subitoque accensa furore,  
nondum illi flavum Proserpina vertice crinem  
abstulerat Stygioque caput damnaverat Orco.  
ergo Iris croceis per caelum roscida pennis 700  
mille trahens varios adverso sole colores  
devolat et supra caput astitit. 'hunc ego Diti  
sacrum iussa fero teque isto corpore solvo':  
sic ait et dextra crinem secat, omnis et una  
dilapsus calor atque in ventos vita recessit. 705





Mediaeval manuscript of Heroides VII from line 124 "[...] Nescio quem thalamis preposuisse suis..." to line 148 "vix tibi continget terra petita seni"

comparando sibi benignitatem sibi suadet potius

his potius populos in dote ambage remissa  
sibi: et adueniens propinquo meo  
Non in arcam dispete felicius Vrbem  
Quam locis istis spernata sacra tenet  
**Gaudet Parat** Si non meum ardua est belli si quere pulvis  
Certe sui paratior iuxta requiescat  
Nem fugiet neque dicitur deponit hostes  
Nec vult leges hic locis arma rapit  
**Deprecatio** Si in pace premam faciemus etiam famem  
Fecit fuit etiam Dardania sacra deo  
Cic superet quosdam nos se genit requies  
Mactetis etiam si nudus ille cum  
Sano et suis felicitate implet amos  
Et vult amicitia mulieris oibis  
Parat precor domum que se in vult habendam  
Vult tunc dote et amare meum  
Non eos sibi Legia: magis et etiam iuxta  
Nec fecerat in vult paratior iuxta  
**Capitulum ad** Si vult vult paratior et hunc dicit  
Dum mea se dicit quiddam est fecit  
Non vult dicit sunt a sibi iuxta dicit  
Tempus ut observem, manda mihi serius ibis  
**Alia capitulum** Cum dabit auxilium vult paratior et hunc dicit  
Et locis etiam dicitur alia vult  
Cum ut cognoscit manda mihi: serio ibis

Idem: From line 149 "Hos potius populos in dote, ambage remissa..." to line 173 "tempus ut observem, manda mihi serius ibis,"



# HEROIDES VII: DIDO TO AENEAS

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When the Fates call, the white swan sings,  
abandoned in the wet sedges of Meander's stream.  
So I sing, not hoping to move you by my pleas (that  
were to oppose the wishes of the God<sup>27</sup>)  
But when I have lost utterly my deserts, my reputation  
My chaste body and soul, it is a small thing to waste words.

Are you determined to leave? To abandon Dido to her misery?  
Casting both your sails and your promise to the winds?  
Are you fixed, Aeneas, on casting-off from altar and dock at once?  
On pursuing an Italian kingdom not even knowing where it is?  
Can neither new Carthage nor its rising walls hold you?  
Nor even the royal sceptre I offered?  
You turn your back on achievement, looking for something to do;  
You have to search the globe for that other place  
When this one you have found already.  
Supposing you find it, who will give you what they already have?  
Who will hand over his fields to some unknown to keep?  
Does a second love lies in store for you, a second Dido?  
You break your promise to the first to give it again to this other.  
How long before you found another city just like Carthage,  
And watch your people from your own high keep?  
Then, when it all comes to pass, the gods hastening to answer  
your prayers,  
Where will you find her, this wife who will love you as I do<sup>28</sup>?

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<sup>27</sup> In Aeneid IV, Aeneas, already preparing his boats in the harbor, tells Dido that Jupiter has sent Mercury to him, directing him to resume his quest immediately.

<sup>28</sup> The 'royal bride' that the ghost of his Trojan wife, Creusa, promises for Aeneas in the Aeneid II, turns out to be the princess of Latium, Lavinia. Their marriage, as Dido insinuates here, will be one of convenience rather than love.

**S**ic ubi fata vocant, udis abiectus in herbis  
ad vada Maeandri concinit albus olor.  
Nec quia te nostra sperem prece posse moveri,  
alloquor: adverso movimus ista deo!  
sed merita famam corpusque animumque pudicum  
cum male perdiderim, perdere verba leve est.

Certus es ire tamen miseramque relinquere Didon  
atque idem venti vela fidemque ferent.  
certus es, Aenea, cum foedere solvere naves  
quaeque ubi sint nescis, Itala regna sequi.  
nec nova Karthago, nec te crescentia tangunt  
moenia nec sceptro tradita summa tuo.  
facta fugis, facienda petis; quaerenda per orbem  
altera, quaesita est altera terra tibi.  
ut terram invenias, quis eam tibi tradet habendam?  
quis sua non notis arva tenenda dabit?  
alter habendus amor tibi restat et altera Dido  
quamque iterum fallas, altera danda fides.  
quando erit, ut condas instar Karthaginis urbem  
et videas populos altus ab arce tuos?  
omnia ut eveniant, nec di tua vota morentur,  
unde tibi, quae te sic amet, uxor erit?

I burn like the sulphurous wax-covered bridal torches<sup>29</sup>.  
Like the holy incense heaped on smokey altar fires.  
I see Aeneas everywhere while ever I wake  
By day and night Aeneas returns to my thoughts.  
That ungrateful man who spurned my generosity,  
And whom, were I not so foolish, I would be happy to miss.

Still I do not hate Aeneas, however ill he thought of me;  
I complain of his disloyalty and, complaining, love him more.  
Take pity on your son's wife, Venus, let his brother<sup>30</sup>,  
Cupid, embrace him and let him serve in your camp.  
Or let him yield himself, the object of my cares, to me  
Who has been taken by love, not that I objected.  
But I am deluded and cling to an illusion;  
This one is not the of the same nature as his mother.

From rocks and mountains were you born,  
Or from oaks clinging to the cliffs or  
Savage beasts gave you birth, or the wild sea such as  
Now you see tossed by the winds: where even now  
You make ready to challenge the floods.  
Where do you flee? Winter blocks your way: with my thanks.  
Just look where Eurys<sup>31</sup> churns up the overturning waves.  
What I would have preferred to owe to your own wishes  
Permit me to credit the storms: the wind and waves  
Are more fair in spirit than you.  
To you — unless I have misjudged you — I am not  
A prize worth dying for as you escape across the far seas.  
But your dear-bought hatred comes at a high price  
If you hold your own life cheap just to be quit of me!

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<sup>29</sup> *Flames and marriage are the dominant images in Dido's lament. These are the torches carried by the bride's companions as they brought her to her husband's home.*

<sup>30</sup> *Aeneas is the mortal son of Venus by his father Anchises, so Amor (Cupid, Eros) who is the divine son of Venus by the god Mercury, is the brother of Aeneas. But Dido's claim to be the daughter-in-law (nurus) of Venus goes, of course, to the heart of her 'misconception' of her relationship with Aeneas.*

<sup>31</sup> *The wind from the South East that would carry Aeneas north to Italy.*

**U**ror ut inducto ceratae sulphure taedae,  
ut pia fumosis addita tura focis.  
Aeneas oculis vigilantis semper inhaeret;  
Aenean animo noxque diesque refert.  
ille quidem male gratus et ad mea munera surdus  
et quo, si non sim stulta, carere velim.

non tamen Aenean, quamvis male cogitat, odi,  
sed queror infidum quæstaque peius amo.  
parce, Venus, nurui, durumque amplectere fratrem,  
frater Amor; castris militet ille tuis.  
aut ego quem coepi—neque enim dedignor—amare,  
materiam curæ praebeat ille meae.  
Fallor et ista mihi falso iactatur imago:  
matris ab ingenio dissidet ille suae.

te lapis et montes innataque rupibus altis  
robora, te saevae progenuere ferae  
aut mare, quale vides agitari nunc quoque ventis:  
qua tamen adversis fluctibus ire paras?  
quo fugis? obstat hiems. hiemis mihi gratia prosit!  
adspice ut eversas concitet Eurus aquas.  
quod tibi malueram, sine me debere procellis;  
iustior est animo ventus et unda tuo.  
Non ego sum tanti, numquid ceneseris inique,  
ut pereas, dum me per freta longa fugis.  
exerces pretiosa odia et constantia magno,  
si, dum me careas, est tibi vile mori.

Soon the winds will drop and Triton will drive  
His blue-green horses across the flattened waves.  
If only you, too, could be turned about like the winds;  
And you will be, unless you are hardier than the oak.  
Why, as if you did not know how crazy it can be,  
Do you now trust the sea that has treated you so ill?  
Once you let go the hawsers, even if the waves beckon you,  
Still the vast deep holds many woes in store for you.  
Nor does it serve those who would break faith to try the sea;  
There is a place that extracts penalties for betrayal!  
Especially when Love is wounded; because, so it s said,  
The mother of Love, rose naked from the Cytherian sea.<sup>32</sup>

I who am ruined, fear lest I ruin or harm him who harmed me;  
Lest my shipwrecked foe should drink the waters of the deep.  
Live, I pray! I will see you lost by something worse than death,  
Instead, you will be blamed for having caused my death.  
Suppose you are caught by a bursting squall —  
May no omen fall from this — what then will you think?  
Straight away you will think of your false oaths and lies,  
And of Didio driven to her death by Phrygian fraud.<sup>33</sup>  
A vision of your deceived spouse, will stand before you,  
Filled with woe, her streaming hair covered in blood.  
What good will it do you to cry out “It’s my fault, forgive me!”  
While lightning bolts you believe are aimed at you rain down?  
Allow the sea’s fury , and your own, to calm down for while.  
Safe passage will be the great reward of a delay.

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<sup>32</sup> Venus is a Roman version of the Greek Aphrodite who was born an adult from the foam of the sea, said by Hesiod to be the sperm of Uranus (castrated by his son Cronus). But the Homeric version of the Venus story is that she was the daughter of Zeus/Jupiter by the titaness Dione. No need to choose, take both!

<sup>33</sup> Phrygia is the land were Troy was located (i.e. Anatolia).

*I*am venti ponent, strataque aequaliter unda  
caeruleis Triton per mare curret equis.  
tu quoque cum ventis utinam mutabilis esses  
et, nisi duritia robora vincis, eris.  
quid, quasi nescires, insana quid aequora possint,  
expertae totiens quam male credis aquae?  
ut, pelago suadente etiam, retinacula solvas,  
multa tamen latus tristia pontus habet.  
nec violasse fidem temptantibus aequora prodest;  
perfidiae poenas exigit ille locus,  
praecipue cum laesus amor, quia mater Amorum  
nuda Cytheriacis edita fertur aquis.

*Perdita ne perdam, timeo, noceamve nocenti  
neu bibat aequoreas naufragus hostis aquas.  
vive, precor! sic te melius quam funere perdam,  
tu potius leti causa ferere mei.  
finge, age, te rapido—nullum sit in omine pondus!—  
turbine deprendi; quid tibi mentis erit?  
protinus occurrent falsae periuria linguae  
et Phrygia Dido fraude coacta mori;  
coniugis ante oculos deceptae stabit imago  
tristis et effusus sanguinolenta comis.  
quid tanti est ut tum "merui! concedite!" dicas,  
quaeque cadent in te fulmina missa putes!  
Da breve saevitiae spatium pelagique tuaeque;  
grande morae pretium tuta futura via est.*

**Y**ou may care little about these things; but spare young Iulus!<sup>34</sup>  
The credit for killing me must be enough for you!  
What has young Ascanius deserved, or your household gods?<sup>35</sup>  
Will waves now drown the idols you saved from the fires?  
But you never carried them with you as you bragged, you liar,  
You never hoisted your father nor the sacred relics on your shoulders.  
You lie about everything; but your lies did not begin with me,  
Nor was I the first to suffer their blows.  
If anyone should ask where is the beautiful mother of Iulus,  
She was killed; left behind by her unfeeling husband!  
You told me these fables and so warned me.  
They have earned me the flames:  
But my punishment will be less grave than my faults.

Nor am I in any doubt that the gods will damn you, too:  
Seven winters have tossed you about by land and sea.  
I received you, thrown up by the waves, into safety;  
Where hardly had I heard your name before I offered you my throne!  
If only I been satisfied with doing this kindness  
And that the story of our sleeping together had been buried!  
That day still pains me, when the sudden rain from a storm  
Drove us together under the sloping roof of a dusky cave.  
I heard a voice: I thought Nymphs were crying the bridal chant,  
But it was the Furies signaling my fate to me.  
Demand the penalty, Shame, beat me, nor save from the ashes  
The broken vows of the marriage bed or my reputation!

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<sup>34</sup> Iulus, known as Ascanius before they reach Latium, is the son of Aeneas who will found the Julian clan that, eventually, would produce Gaius Julius Caesar and would include Caesar's adopted son Octavian (the Emperor Augustus). Through Iulus, both Dictator and Emperor claimed descent from Venus.

<sup>35</sup> The Penates (and the Lars) were gods of the hearth, particular to every household, who embodied the spirit of the ancestral family. The home of every pious Roman family had a small altar containing their images/idols where the spirits lived.

**H**aec minus ut cures, puero parcatur Iulo!  
te satis est titulum mortis habere meae.  
quid puer Ascanius, quid di meruere Penates?  
ignibus ereptos obruet unda deos?  
sed neque fers tecum, nec, quae mihi, perfide, iactas,  
presserunt umeros sacra paterque tuos.  
omnia mentiris; neque enim tua fallere lingua  
incipit a nobis, primaque plector ego:  
si quaeras ubi sit formosi mater Iuli—  
occidit a duro sola relicta viro!  
Haec mihi narraras et me monuere.  
Merentem ure: minor culpa poena futura mea est.

Nec mihi mens dubia est, quin te tua numina damnent:  
per mare, per terras septima iactat hiems.  
fluctibus eiectum tuta statione recepi  
vixque bene audito nomine regna dedi.  
his tamen officiis utinam contenta fuisset  
nec mea concubitu fama sepulta foret!  
illa dies nocuit, qua nos declive sub antrum  
caeruleus subitis compulit imber aquis.  
audieram vocem; nymphas ululasse putavi:  
Eumenides fatis signa dedere meis.  
Exige, laese pudor, poenas, violataque lecti  
iura neque ad cineres fama retenta meos!



A wretch and filled with shame I come to you, ancestors,  
And to the ghost and ashes of Sycheus.  
I keep sacred the image of Sycaeus in his marble  
sanctuary,  
Covered with wreaths and shining white fleece.  
Here, four times, have I felt myself urged by a well-known voice:  
In a whisper he says "Elissa, come to me!"<sup>36</sup>  
Let there be no delay: I come, I come to you as a bride aught.  
Sitll, I admit to my shame I come late.  
Forgive my faults; he who is their real author deceived me;  
He must share the guilt for my black deeds.  
His divine mother and his aged father, a worthy son's burdens,  
Gave me hope he would stay as a faithful husband should.  
If this were a mistake, still it had honorable origins.  
Had he been faithful, there would be no cause for regret.

I follow the path that fate set for me long ago,  
It endures to the very end of my life.  
My brother killed my husband, slain at the altar in our home,  
And reaped the reward of his monstrous crime,  
While I was forced to flee down unknown paths, pursued by  
enemies,  
Abandoning my homeland and the ashes of my husband.  
Having slipped from the grasp of my brother and the sea,  
I arrived at these unknown shores,  
Where the strand I purchased, was the one I gave you, traitor!  
I built a city and erected high walls around its broad bounds:  
The envy of the neighboring cities. War threatened;  
They tested me, a woman and a foreigner, by provocations;  
I had scarcely time to build city gates and prepare a defence.  
I attracted a thousand suitors, who complained that preferred  
To join myself in marriage with I some stranger or other.  
Why do you hesitate to shop me to Gaetulian Iarbas?  
I would offer my arm for your shameful act.  
Then there's my brother, who offers his unworthy hand  
Splattered in my husband's gore to be sprayed with mine, too.

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<sup>36</sup> Elissa is Dido's Phoenician name

**V**osque mei manes animaeque cinisque Sychaei,  
ad quas, me miseram, plena pudoris eo.  
est mihi marmorea sacratus in aede Sychaeus;  
oppositae frondes velleraque alba tegunt.  
hinc ego me sensi noto quater ore citari;  
ipse sono tenui dixit "Elissa, veni!"  
Nulla mora est: venio, venio tibi debita coniunx,—  
sum tamen admisso tarda pudore meo!  
da veniam culpae; decepit idoneus auctor;  
invidiam noxae detrahit ille meae.  
diva parens seniorque pater, pia sarcina nati,  
spem mihi mansuri rite dedere viri.  
si fuit errandum, causas habet error honestas:  
adde fidem, nulla parte pigendus erit.

Durat in extremum vitaeque novissima nostrae  
prosequitur fati, qui fuit ante, tenor:  
occidit internas coniunx mactatus ad aras  
et sceleris tanti praemia frater habet,  
exul agor cineresque viri patriamque relinquo  
et feror in dubias hoste sequente vias;  
adplicor ignotis fratrique elapsa fretoque;  
quod tibi donavi, perfide, litus emo.  
urbem constitui lateque patentia fixi  
moenia finitimis invidiosa locis.  
bella tument. bellis peregrina et femina temptor  
vixque rudis portas urbis et arma paro.  
mille procis placui, qui me coiere querentes  
nescio quem thalamis praeposuisse suis.  
quid dubitas vinctam Gaetulo tradere Iarbae?  
praebuerim sceleri bracchia nostra tuo.  
est etiam frater, cuius manus impia poscit  
respergi nostro sparsa cruore viri.

Put down those idols whose rites you profane by touching them!

An unworthy hand may not beseech the blessings of heaven.

Were you to have been the guardian of the gods that escaped Troy's flames,

The gods had regretted their escape!

Perhaps one day, scoundrel, you might desert a pregnant Dido,<sup>37</sup>

My body enclosing, hidden, some part of you.

The wretched child would suffer the fate of his mother,

And you would beget the funeral of a child not yet born.

Then the brother of Iulus would die with his own mother,

One punishment that carries away the two of us together.

"But the God bids me go!" I wish He had forbidden you to come

That Trojan feet had never touched Punic soil!

Surely, this same god's direction that saw you tossed about

By stormy winds, wasing long months battling furious seas?

You would not have needed to work any harder

To make your way back to Pergamom in its glory days when

Hector lived.<sup>38</sup>

But it's Tiber's waters you seek, not the land of your fathers on Simois' river.<sup>39</sup>

Of course, when you find what you desire, you will be strangers.

So that that land will lay hidden from you and shun your boats;<sup>40</sup>

You may find the land you seek, finally, only when you are old.

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<sup>37</sup> This taunt recalls Dido's pitiful-foolish wish in the *Aeneid* (IV:329) that she were pregnant so that she would have 'another little Ascanius' to remember Aeneas by after he had left her.

<sup>38</sup> i.e. back to Troy in the days of the heroic prince Hector, son of Priam and Hecuba

<sup>39</sup> Simois is the river that flowed past the city of Troy.

<sup>40</sup> The 'hidden land' is a play on the popular etymology of 'Latium', the land to the East and South of the river Tiber where Rome was founded. A more likely derivation is from 'latus' meaning broad or flat.

*P*one deos et quae tangendo sacra profanas!  
non bene caelestis impia dextra colit.  
si tu cultor eras elapsis igne futurus,  
paenitet elapsos ignibus esse deos.  
Forsitan et gravidam Didon, scelerate, relinquo  
parsque tui lateat corpore clausa meo.  
accedet fati matris miserabilis infans  
et nondum nato funeris auctor eris.  
cumque parente sua frater morietur Iuli,  
poenaque conexos auferet una duos.

*"Sed iubet ire deus." vellem vetuisset adire  
Punica nec Teucris pressa fuisset humus.  
hoc duce nempe deo ventis agitaris iniquis  
et teris in rapido tempora longa freto?  
Pergama vix tanto tibi erant repetenda labore,  
Hectore si vivo quanta fuere forent.  
non patrium Simoenta petis, sed Thybridis undas,  
nempe ut pervenias quo cupis hospes eris.  
utque latet vitatque tuis abstrusa carinis,  
vix tibi continget terra petita seni.*

Give over your wandering! You could take for a dower  
This people and Pygmalion's treasure that I brought here.  
Bring Troy to Tyre, adopt a city with better fortune,  
And the seat, trappings and scepter of a consecrated king.  
If your heart is set on war, if Iulus wants to know  
Where his share in Martial triumph might come from,  
What enemy he might overcome, lest he miss out we'll find him  
some.

Here you might make peace, there make war.  
Only I beg, for the sake of your mother and  
By the spears and arrows of your brother Cupid,  
By the holy companions of your flight, the gods of Dardanus,  
— may they, whomever of your people you save,  
Triumph in the end; may that cruel war and  
The fall of Troy be the worst of it for you;  
May Ascanius live out his years in happiness and  
The bones of old Anchises rest easier —  
Spare the house that has been given to you.

What crime do you say I have committed, except to have loved?  
I am not from Phythia nor descend from great Mycaenae,  
Neither my husband nor my father stood against you.  
If you would be ashamed to call me wife,  
I could be called hostess rather than bride;  
While Dido is yours, she will be whatever you wish.

**H**os potius populos in dotem ambage remissa  
accipe et advectas Pygmalionis opes.  
Ilion in Tyriam transfer feliciter urbem  
resque loco regis sceptraque sacra tene!  
si tibi mens avida est belli, si quaerit Iulus,  
unde suo partus Marte triumphus eat,  
quem superet, nequid desit praebeamus hostem;  
hic pacis leges, hic locus arma capit.  
tu modo—per matrem fraternaue tela, sagittas,  
perque fugae comites, Dardana sacra, deos!—  
sic superent, quoscumque tua de gente reportas  
Mars ferus et damni sit modus ille tui  
Ascaniusque suos feliciter inpleat annos  
et senis Anchisae molliter ossa cubent!—  
parce, precor, domui, quae se tibi tradit habendam!

quod crimen dicis praeter amasse meum?  
non ego sum Pthias magnisque oriunda Mycenis,  
nec steterunt in te virque paterque meus.  
si pudet uxoris, non nupta, sed hospita dicar;  
dum tua sit Dido, quidlibet esse feret.

**T**he heaving seas of the African coast are well known to me,  
At different times they make or deny way.  
When the winds allow departure you will raise your linen  
sails,

For now, the light seaweed holds your beached ships.  
Allow me to watch the weather; you will get away more surely,  
Nor will I allow you to stay, even if you should wish it.  
Your companions are asking for rest,  
Your broken fleet, too, only half-rebuilt, needs a slight delay.  
Considering your kindness, and that other thing I might put to  
you,<sup>41</sup>  
Not in hope of marriage, I seek a little delay  
While the winds and my love grow calmer, and while by time and  
habit  
I learn to be stronger and to suffer sorrow.

If not, my intention is to end my life;  
You cannot go on wounding me for long.  
If only you could see me writing these words.  
As I write the Trojan blade sits in my lap,  
The tears roll down my cheeks and fall on the naked blade,  
That, for now, tears stain but soon it will be blood.  
How fitting to my fate is the gift you gave me!  
It will furnish the small expenses of my tomb.  
Nor will this be the first weapon to wound my breast,  
That place of love has a deep wound already.

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<sup>41</sup> *It's unclear what this 'other thing' might be. The pregnancy hinted above?*

**N**ota mihi freta sunt Afrum plangentia litus;  
temporibus certis dantque negantque viam:  
cum dabit aura viam, praebebis carbasa ventis;  
nunc levis eiectam continet alga ratem.  
tempus ut observem, manda mihi: certius ibis,  
nec te, si cupies, ipsa manere sinam.  
et socii requiem poscunt, laniataque classis  
postulat exiguas semirefecta moras.  
pro meritis et siqua tibi praebebimus ultra,  
non spe coniugii tempora parva peto:  
dum freta mitescunt et amor, dum temperat usum,  
fortiter edisco tristia posse pati.

Si minus, est animus nobis effundere vitam;  
in me crudelis non potes esse diu.  
adspicias utinam, quae sit scribentis imago;  
scribimus, et gremio Troicus ensis adest;  
perque genas lacrimae strictum labuntur in ensem,  
qui iam pro lacrimis sanguine tinctus erit.  
quam bene conveniunt fato tua munera nostro!  
instruis impensa nostra sepulcra brevi.  
nec mea nunc primum feriuntur pectora telo:  
ille locus saevi vulnus amoris habet.



**A**nna, my sister, sister Anna, my faults you know well;  
Now you will offer the last honors to my ashes.  
When the flames have consumed me, do not write  
“Elissa, Sychaeus’s wife,”  
Instead let the epitaph on my marble headstones be:

“AENEAS SUPPLIED THE BLADE AND THE CAUSE OF DEATH:  
DIDO’S OWN HAND STRUCK THE BLOW THAT FELLED HER.”



**A** nna soror, soror Anna, meae male conscia culpa,  
iam dabis in cineres ultima dona meos.  
nec consumpta rogis inscribar Elissa Sychaei,  
hoc tantum in tumuli marmore carmen erit:

PRAEBUIT AENEAS ET CAUSAM MORTIS ET ENSEM.  
IPSA SUA DIDO CONCIDIT USA MANU.



